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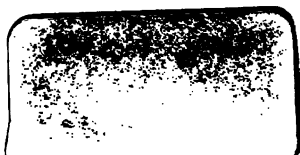


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PECULIAR.

VOL. II.

LONDON
PRINTED BY SPOTTISWOODE AND CO.
NEW-STREET SQUARE

PECULIAR:

A TALE OF THE GREAT TRANSITION.

BY

EPES SARGENT.

EDITED BY

WILLIAM HOWITT.

Authorized Edition.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,
SUCCESSORS TO HENRY COLBURN,

13 GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1864.

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250. s. 25.



PECULIAR.

CHAPTER I.

THE VENDUE.

A queen on a scaffold is not so pitiful a sight as a woman on the auction-block."—*Charles Sumner.*

Slavery gratifies at once the love of power, the love of money, and the love of ease; it finds a victim for anger who cannot smite back his oppressor; and it offers to all, without measure, the seductive privileges which the Mormon gospel reserves for the true believers on earth, and the Bible of Mahomet only dares promise to the saints in heaven.—*O. W. Holmes.*

ABOUT a month after the explosion of the Pontiac, a select company were assembled, one beautiful morning in June, under a stately palmetto-tree in front of the auction store of Messrs. Ripper & Co. in New Orleans, and on the shady side of the street. There was to be a sale of prime slaves that day. A chair with a table before it, flanked on either side by a bale of cotton, afforded accommodations for the ceremony. Mr. Ripper, the

auctioneer, was a young man, rather handsome, and well dressed, but with that flushed complexion and telltale expression of the eyes which a habit of dissipation generally imparts to its victims.

The company numbered some fifty. They were lounging about in groups, and were nearly all of them smoking cigars. Some were attired in thin grass-cloth coats and pantaloons, some in the perpetual black broadcloth to which Americans adhere so pertinaciously, even when the thermometer is at ninety. There was but one woman present; and she was a strong-minded widow, a Mrs. Barkdale, who by the death of her husband had come into the possession of a plantation, and now, instead of sending her overseer, had come herself, to bid off a likely field-hand.

The negroes to be sold, about a dozen in number, were in the warehouse. Mr. Ripper paced the sidewalk, looking now and then impatiently at his watch. The sale was to begin at ten. Suddenly a tall, angular, ill-formed man, dressed in a light homespun suit, came up to Ripper and drew him aside to where a young man, dressed in black and wearing a white neck-cloth, stood bracing his back up against a tree.

His swarthy complexion, dark eyes, and long nose made it doubtful whether the Caucasian, the Jewish, or the African blood predominated in his veins. A general languor and unsteadiness of body showed that he had been indulging in the "ardent."

To this individual the tall man led up the auctioneer, and said: "The Reverend Quattles, Mr. Ripper; Mr. Ripper, the Reverend Quattles. Gemmlemen, yer both know *me*. I'm Delancy Hyde—Virginia born, be Gawd. ('Scuze me, reverend sir.) None of your Puritan scum! My ahnces'tor, Delancy Hyde, kum over with Pocahontas and John Smith; my gra'ffther owned more niggers nor 'ary other man in the county; my fater was cheated and broke up by a d—d Yankee judge, sir; that's why the family acres ain't mine."

"I've but five minutes more," interposed Mr. Ripper, impatiently.

"Wall, sir," continued the Colonel, "this gemmleman, as I war tellin' yer, is the Reverend Quattles, of Alabamy."

The Reverend Quattles bowed, and, with fishy eyes and a maudlin smile, put his hand on his heart.

"The little nig I've brung yer ter sell, Mr. Ripper, b'longs ter the Reverend Quattles's brother, a high-toned gemmleman, who lives in Mobile, but has been unfortnit in business, and has had ter sell off his niggers. An' as I was goin' ter Noo Orleenz, he puts this little coloured gal in my hands ter sell. The Reverend Quattles wanted ter buy her, but was too poor. He then said he'd go with me ter see she mowt fall inter the right hahnds. In puttin' her up, yer must say 'twas a great 'fiction, and all that, ter part with her; that the Reverend Quattles, ruther nor see her fall inter the wrong hands, would sell his library, and so on; that she's the child of a quadroon as has been in the family all her life, and as is a sort of half-sister of the Reverend Quattles.

"Oh, yes! I understand all that game," said Ripper, knocking with his little finger the ashes from his cigar.

The Colonel, in an *aside* to the auctioneer, now remarked: "The Reverend Quattles in tryin' to steady his narves for the scene, has tuk too stiff a horn, yer see."

"Yes; take him where he can sleep it off. It's time for the sale to begin. Remember your lot is Number 12, and will be struck off last."

The auctioneer then made his way across the street, jumped on one of the cotton bales, and thence into the chair placed near the table.

"Come, Quattles," said Hyde, "we've time for another horn afore we're wanted."

"No yer don't, Kunnle!" exclaimed Quattles, throwing off that worthy's arm from his shoulder. "I tell yer this is too cussed mean a business for any white man; I tell yer I won't give in ter it."

"Hush! Don't bawl so," pleaded the Colonel.

"I *will* bawl. Yer think yer've got me so drunk I hain't no conscience left. But I tell yer, I woan't give in. I tell yer, I'll 'xpose the hull trick!"

"Hush! hush!" said the Colonel, patting him as he might a restive beast. "Arter the sale's over, we'll have a fust-rate dinner all by ou'selves at the St. Charles. Terrapin soup and pompinoe! Champagne and juleps! Ice-cream and jelly! A reg'lar blow-out! Think of that, Quattles! Think of that!"

"Cuss the vittles! Oh, I'm a poor, mis'able, used-up, good-for-northin' creetur, wuss nor a nigger!—yes, wuss nor a nigger!" said Quattles, bursting into maudlin sobs and weeping. The

Colonel walked him away into a contiguous drinking-saloon.

“Brandy-smashes for two,” said the Colonel.

The decoctions were brewed, and the tumblers slid along the marble counter, with the despatch of a man who takes pride in his vocation. They were as quickly emptied. Quattles gulped down his liquor eagerly. The Colonel then hired a room containing a sofa, and, seeing his companion safely bestowed there, made his own way back to the auction.

On one of the cotton-bales stood a prime article called a negro-wench. This was lot Number 3. She was clad in an old faded and filthy calico dress that had apparently been made for a girl half her size. A small bundle containing the rest of her wardrobe lay at her feet. Her bare arms, neck, and breasts were conspicuously displayed, and her knees were hardly covered by the stinted skirt. Without shame she stood there, as if used to the scene, and rather flattered by the glib commendations of the auctioneer.

“Look at her, gentlemen!” said he. “All her pints good. Only twenty-three years old, and has had five children already. And thar’s no reason why she shouldn’t have a dozen more.

I'm only bid eight hunderd dollars for this most valubble wench. Only eight hunderd dollars for this superior article. Thank you, sir; you've an eye for good pints. I'm offered eight hunderd and twenty-five. Only eight hunderd and twenty-five for this most useful hand. Jest look at her, sir. Limbs straight, teeth all sound; wool thick, though she has had five children. All livin', too; ain't they, Portia?"

"Yes, massa, all sole ter Massa Wade down thar in Texas. He'm gwoin' ter raise the hull lot."

"You hear, gentlemen. Thar's nothin' vicious about her. Makes no fuss because her young ones are carried off. Knows they'll be taken good care of. A good, reasonable, pleasant-tempered wench as ever lived. And now I'm offered only eight hunderd and — Did I hear fifty? Thank you, sir. Eight hunderd and fifty dollars is bid. Is thar nary a man har that knows the valoo of a prime article like this? Eight hunderd and fifty dollars. Goin' for eight hunderd and fifty! Goin'! Gone! For eight hunderd and fifty dollars. Gentlemen, you must be calculating on the opening of the slave trade, if you'll stand

by and see niggers sacrificed in this way. Pass up the next lot."

The next "lot" was a man, a sulky, discontented-looking creature, but large, erect, and with shoulders that would have made his fortune as a hotel-porter. Laying down his bundle, he mounted the cotton bale with a weary, desponding air, as if he had begun to think there was no good in reserve for him, either on the earth or in the heavens.

"Lot Number 4 is Ike," said the auctioneer. "A fust-rate field-hand. Will hoe more cotton in three hours than a common nigger will in ten. Ike is pious, and has been a famous exhorter among the niggers; belongs to the Baptist church. You all know, gentlemen, the advantage of piety in a nigger. Ike's piety ought to add thirty per cent, to his wuth. I'm offered nine hunderd dollars for Ike. Nine hunderd dollars!"

Here a squinting, hatchet-faced fellow in a broad-brimmed straw hat, who had been making quite a puddle of tobacco juice on the ground, leaped upon the bale, and lifted the slave's faded baize shirt so as to get a look at his back. Then, putting his finger on the side of his nose, the examiner winked at Ripper, and jumped down.

"Scored?" asked an anxious inquirer.

"Scored? Wall, stranger, he's been scored, then put under a harrer, then paddled an' burnt. A hard ticket that."

The nine hundred dollar bid was as yet in the imagination of the auctioneer. But, with the quick penetration of his craft, he saw the strong-minded widow standing on tiptoe, her face eager with the excitement of bidding, and her words only checked by the desire to judge from the amount of competition whether the article were a desirable one.

"A thousand and ten! Thank you, sir, thank you!" said Ripper, bowing to a gentleman he had seen only in his mind's eye. Nobody could dispute the bid, all eyes being directed toward the auctioneer.

"A thousand and twenty-five," continued Ripper, turning in an opposite direction, and bowing to an equally imaginary bidder. Then, apparently catching the eye of the competing customer, "A thousand and forty!" he exclaimed; and so, seesawing from one chimerical gentleman to the other, he carried the sham bidding up to a thousand and seventy-five.

At this point Mrs. Barkdale, pale, and following

with swayings of her own body the motions of the auctioneer, her heart in her mouth almost depriving her of speech, waved her hand to attract his attention, and, rising on tiptoe, gasped forth, "A thousand and eighty!"

"Thank you, madam," said Ripper, politely touching his hat. Then, apparently catching the eye of his imaginary bidder on the right, "Monsieur Dupré," he said, "you won't allow such a bargain to slip through your hands, will you? *Voyez! Où trouverez-vous un mieux?* Thank you, sir; thank you! A thousand and ninety—I'm offered a thousand and ninety for this superior field-hand. Goin'—goin'. Thank you, madam. Eleven hundred dollars; only eleven hundred dollars for this most valubble piece of property. I assure you, gentlemen, 'tis not often you've such a chance. Goin' for eleven hundred dollars! Are you all done? Eleven hundred dollars. Goin'! Gone! You were too late, sir. To Mrs. Barkdale for eleven hundred dollars."

The widow, almost ready to faint, made her way to her carriage, and was driven off. Some of the company shrugged their shoulders, while others uttered a low, significant whistle. Ike, who maintained his dogged, sulky look, picked up

his bundle, and was remanded to the warehouse, there to be kept till claimed.

"Now, gentlemen," said the auctioneer, "I have to call your attention to the primest fancy article that it has ever been my good fortune to put under the hammer. Lot Number 5 is the quadroon gal, Nelly. Bring her on."

Here a negro assistant led out, with his hand on her shoulder, a girl apparently not more than eighteen years of age, and helped her on the cotton-bale. She was modestly clad in an old but neatly-fitting black silk gown, and, notwithstanding the heat, wore round her shoulders a checked woollen shawl. Her hair was straight. Evidently she derived her blood chiefly from white ancestors. She was very pretty; and had a neat, compact figure, in which the tendency to plumpness, common among the quadroons, was not yet too marked for grace.

It was apparently the first time she had ever been put up for sale; for she had a scared, deprecatory look, strangely accompanied with a smile put on for the purpose of propitiating some well-disposed master, if such there might be among the crowd.

"Now, gentlemen," said Ripper, "here is Lot

Number 5. It speaks for itself, and needs no puffin' from me. But thar is a little story connected with Nelly. She was the property of Miss Pettigrew, down in Plaquemine, and always thought she'd be free as soon as her missis died. But her missis fell under conviction jest afore her death, and ordered in her will that Nelly should be sold, and the proceeds paid over to the fund for the support of indigent young men studyin' for the ministry. So, gentlemen, in biddin' lib'rally for this superior lot, you'll have the satisfaction of forruding a most-er praiseworthy and pious objek."

"Make her drop her shawl," said a grey-haired man, with a blotched, unwholesome skin, and with dirty deposits of stale tobacco-juice at the corners of his mouth.

"Certainly, Mr. Tibbs," said Ripper, pulling off the girl's shawl as if he had been uncovering a sample of Sea-Island cotton.

"She has been a lady's maid, and nothin' else, I can assure you, gentlemen. Small hands and feet, yer see. Look at that neck and them shoulders! Her missis has kept her very strict; and the executor, by whose order she is sold, warrants you, gentlemen, she has never been a *mother*. A

very nice, good-natured, correct, and capable gal. Will never give her owner any trouble, and will ollerz do her best to please. Shall I start her at a thousand dollars?"

Here Mr. Tibbs and two other men jumped on the bale, and began to give a closer examination to the article. One pinched the flesh of its smooth and well-rounded shoulders. Another stretched its lips apart so as to get a sight at its teeth. Mr. Tibbs pulled at the bosom of its dress in order to draw conclusions as to the truth of the auctioneer's warranty.

"Please don't," expostulated the girl, putting away his hand, and with her scared look trying hard to smile, but showing in the act a set of teeth that at once added twenty per cent. to her value in the estimation of the beholder.

"You see her, gentlemen," said Ripper. "She's just what she appears to be. No sham about her. No paddin'. All wholesome flesh and blood. What shall I have for Nelly?"

"A thousand dollars," said Tibbs.

"You hear the bid, gentlemen. I'm offered a thousand dollars for this *very* superior article. Only a thousand dollars."

"Eleven hundred," said Jarvey, the well-known keeper of a gambling-saloon.

Tibbs glanced angrily at the audacious competitor, then nodded to the auctioneer.

"Eleven hundred and fifty is what I'm offered for Lot Number 5. Gentlemen, bar in mind that you air servin' a pious cause in helpin' me to git the full valoo of this most-er excellent article. Remember the proceeds go to edicate indigent young men for the ministry. Mr. Jarvey, can't you do su'thin' for the Church?"

"Twelve hundred," said Jarvey.

"Twelve fifty," exclaimed Tibbs, abruptly, in a tone sharp with exasperation and malevolence.

Nelly, seeing that the bidding was confined to these two, looked from the one to the other with an expression of deepest solicitude, as if scanning their countenances for some way of hope. Alas! there was not much to choose. To Jarvey, as the less ill-favoured, she evidently inclined; but Tibbs had plainly made up his mind to "go his pile" on the purchase, and the article was finally knocked down to him for fifteen hundred dollars.

"You owt to be proud to bring sich a price as that, my gal," said Ripper, in a tone of congratulation. Nelly made a piteous, frightened attempt at a smile, then burst into tears, and got down from the bale, stumbling in her confusion so as

to fall on her hands to the ground, much to the amusement of the spectators.

The lots from six to eleven inclusive did not excite much competition. They were mostly field-hands, coarse and stolid in feature, and showing a cerebral development of the most rudimental kind. They brought prices ranging from seven hundred to nine hundred dollars.

"Now, gentlemen," said Ripper, "I have one little fancy article to offer you, and then the sale will be closed. Bring on Number 12."

The coloured assistant here issued from the warehouse and crossed the street, bearing a little quadroon girl and her bundle in his arms. Simultaneously a new and elegant barouche, drawn by two sleek horses, and having two blacks in livery on the driver's box, stopped in the rear of the crowd. The occupant got out and strolled toward the stand. He was a middle-aged man, with well-formed features, a smooth, florid complexion, and a figure inclining to portliness. Apparently a gentleman, were it not for that imperious, aggressive air, which the habit of domineering from infancy over slaves generally imparts. He carried a riding-whip, with which he carelessly switched his legs.

As he drew near the stand, the auctioneer's assistant placed on the cotton-bale the little quadroon girl. She was almost an infant, evidently not three years old, with very black hair and eyebrows, though her eyes did not harmonise with the hue. She was naked even to her feet, with the exception of a little chemise that did not reach to her knees. Her figure promised grace and health for the future. In the shape of her features there was no sign of the African intermixture indicated in the hue of her skin. With a wondering, anxious look she regarded the scene before her, and was making an obvious effort to keep from crying.

"Now here is Number 12, gentlemen," said Ripper. "Jest look at the little lady! Thar she is. Fust-rate stock. Look at her hands and feet. Belonged to the Quattles family of Mobile, and I'm charged by the Rev. Mr. Quattles to knock her down to himself (though he can't afford to buy her) rather than have her go into the wrong hands. She's the child of his half-sister, yer see, gentlemen. What am I offered for this little lady?"

"A hundred dollars," said a voice from the crowd.

"I'm offered two hunderd dollars for this little tidbit," said Ripper, pretending to have misunderstood the bid.

Colonel Delancy Hyde stepped forward, and, taking a position at the side of the auctioneer, addressed the crowd: "I know the Quattles family, gentlemen. It's an unfort'nit family, and they'd never have put this yere child under the hammer if so be they hadn't been forced right up ter it by starn necessity."

"Who the hell are you?" asked a tall, lank, defiant-looking gentleman, who seemed to be disgusted at the Colonel's interference.

"Who am I? I'll tell yer who am I," cried the latter. "I'm Colonel Delancy Hyde. Anything to say agin that? Virginia-born, be Gawd! My father was Virginia-born afore me, and his father afore him, and they owned more niggers nor you ever looked at. Anything to say agin that, yer despisable corn-cracker, yer!"

"Hold yer tongue, Colonel: you're drivin' off a bidder," whispered Ripper. The Colonel collapsed at once, quelling his indignation.

"I'm offered two hunderd dollars for Number 12," exclaimed the auctioneer, putting his hand on the little girl's head. "If there's any good judge

here of figger an' face, he won't see this article sacrificed for such a trifle."

"Two twenty-five," said Tibbs.

The gentleman who had descended from the barouche here drew nearer, and examined the form and features of the little girl with a closer scrutiny.

"Two fifty," said he, as the result of his inspection.

Tibbs, irritated by the competition, made his bid three hundred.

"Four hundred!" said the man with the riding-whip.

"Five hundred!" retorted Tibbs, ejecting the words with a vicious snort.

"Six hundred," returned his competitor, with perfect nonchalance.

"Seven hundred and fifty," shrieked Tibbs.

"A thousand," said the other, playing with his whip.

Tibbs did not venture further. Mortified and angry, he turned away, and consoled himself with an enormous cut of tobacco.

"Cash takes it," said the successful bidder, putting his finger to his lips by way of caution to the auctioneer, and then beckoning him to come

down. Ripper exchanged a few words with him in a whisper and told his assistant to put the little girl with her bundle into the barouche, and throw a carriage shawl over her.

As the barouche drove off, Hyde asked, "Who is he?"

"Cash," replied Ripper. "Didn't you hear? I reckon you see more of overseers than of planters. You've done amazin' well, Colonel, gittin' such a price fur that little concern."

"Yes," said Hyde; "Mr. Cash is a high-tone one, that's a fak. I should know him agin 'mong a thousand."

The company dispersed, the auctioneer settled with his customers, and Hyde went to find Quattles, and give him the jackal's share of the spoils.

Let us follow the barouche. Leaving the business streets, it rolled on till, in about a quarter of an hour, it stopped before a respectable brick house, on the door of which was the sign, "Mrs. Gentry's Seminary for Young Ladies." Here the gentleman got out and rang the bell.

"Is Mrs. Gentry at home?"

"Yes, sir. Walk in. I will take your card."

He was ushered into a parlour. In five minutes the lady appeared,—a tall, erect person with

prominent features, a sallow complexion, and dry puffs of iron-gray hair parted over her forehead. A Southern judge's daughter and a widow, Mrs. Gentry kept one of the best private schools in the city. On seeing the name of Carberry Ratcliff on the card, which Tarquin, the coloured servant, had handed to her, she went with alacrity to her mirror, and after a little pranking, descended to greet her distinguished visitor.

"Perhaps you have heard of me before," began Mr. Ratcliff.

"Often, sir. Be seated," said the lady, charmed at the idea of having a visit from the lord of a thousand slaves.

"I have in my barouche, madam, a little girl I wish to leave with you. She is my property, and I want her well taken care of. Can you receive her?"

Mrs. Gentry looked significantly at the gentleman, and he, as if anticipating her interrogatory, replied: "The child came into my possession only within this hour. I bought her quite accidentally at auction. She has none of my blood in her veins, I assure you."

"Can I see her?"

"Yes;" and, walking to the window, Ratcliff

motioned to one of his negroes to bring the child in. This was done; and the infant was placed on the floor with her little bundle by her side, and almost nude as she was when exposed on the auction-block.

"A quadroon, I should think," said Mrs. Gentry.

"I really don't know what she is," replied Ratcliff. "I want you, however, to take her into your family, and raise her as carefully as if you knew her to be my daughter. You shall be liberally paid for your trouble."

"Is she to know that she is a slave?"

"As to that I can instruct you hereafter. Meanwhile keep the fact a secret, and mention my name to no one in connection with her. You can occasionally send me a daguerreotype, that I may see if her looks fulfil her promise. I wish you to be particular about her music and French, also her dancing. Let her understand all about dress too. You can draw upon me as often as you choose for the amount we fix upon; and the probability is, I shall not wish to see her till she reaches her fifteenth or sixteenth year. I rely upon you to keep her strictly, and, as she grows older, to guard her against making acquaintances with

any of the other sex. Will seven hundred dollars a year pay you for your trouble?"

"Amply, sir," said the gratified lady. "I will do my best to carry out your wishes."

"You need not write me oftener than once a year," said Ratcliff.

"Not if she were dangerously ill?"

"No, not even then. You could take better care of her than I; and all my interest in her is *in futuro*."

"I think I understand, sir," said Mrs. Gentry; "and I will at once make a note of what you say."

"Here is payment for the first half-year in advance," said Ratcliff.

"Thank you, sir," returned the lady, quite overwhelmed at the great planter's munificence.

"Shall I write you a receipt?"

"It is superfluous, madam."

All this while the child, with a seriousness strangely at variance with her infantile appearance, sat on the floor, looking intently first at the woman, then at the man, and evidently striving to understand what they were saying. Ratcliff now took his leave; but Mrs. Gentry called him back before he had reached the door.

"Excuse me, sir, there is something I wish to

ask you? What was it? Oh! By what name shall we call the child?"

"Upon my word," said Ratcliff, "I have forgotten the name the auctioneer gave her. No matter! Call her anything you please."

"Well, then, Estelle is a pretty name. Shall I call her Estelle?"

Ratcliff started, came close up to Mrs. Gentry, looked her steadily in the face, and asked, "What put that name into your head?"

"I don't know. Probably I have seen it in some novel."

"Well, don't call her Estelle. Call her Ellen Murray."

"I will remember."

And the interview closed.

After the gentleman had gone, the child, with an anxious and grieved expression of face, tried to articulate an inquiry which Mrs. Gentry found it difficult to understand. At last she concluded it was an attempt to say, "Where's Hatty?"

Mrs. Gentry rang the bell, and it was answered by a coloured woman of large, stately figure, whose peculiar hue and straight black hair showed that she was descended from some tribe distinct from ordinary Africans.

"Where's the chambermaid?" asked Mrs. Gentry.

"O missis, dat Deely's nebber on de spot when she's wanted. De Lord lub us, what hab we here?"

"A new inmate of the family, Esha. I've taken her to bring up."

"Some rich man's lub-child, I reckon, missis. But ain't she a little darlin'?" And Esha took her up from the floor, and kissed her. The child, feeling she had at last found a friend, threw its arms about the woman's neck, and broke into a low, plaintive sobbing, as if her little heart were overfull of long-suppressed grief.

"Thar! thar!" said Esha, soothing her; "she mus'n't greeb nebber no more. Ole Esha will lub her dearly!"

Mrs. Gentry opened the bundle, and was surprised to see several articles of clothing of a rich and fine texture, all neatly marked, though somewhat soiled.

"There, Esha," she said, "take the poor little thing and her bundle up-stairs, and dress her. To-morrow I'll get her some new clothes."

Esha obeyed, and the child thenceforth clung to her as to a mother. To the servant's surprise,

when she came to wash away the little one's tears, the skin parted with its tawny hue, and showed white and fair. On examining the child's hair, too, it was found to be dyed. What could be the object of this? It never occurred to Esha that the little waif might be a slave, and that a white slave was not so saleable as a coloured.

Mrs. Gentry communicated the phenomenon at once to Mr. Ratcliff, but he never alluded to it in any subsequent letter or conversation.

CHAPTER II.

SHALL THERE BE A WEDDING ?

Ah ! spare your idol ; think him human still ;
 Charms he may have, but he has frailties too ;
 Dote not too much, nor spoil what ye admire.

Young.

THE question as to the inheritance of the Aylesford-Berwick property was not decided without a lawsuit. The case was put into the courts, and kept there many months. The heavy legal expenses to which Charlton was subjected, and his reluctance to meet them, protracted the contest by alienating his lawyers. Pompilard went straight to the point by promising his counsel a fee of a hundred thousand dollars in the event of success ; and thus he enlisted and kept active the best professional aid. Still the prospect was doubtful.

But even the *law's* delay must finally have an end. The hour of the final settlement of the great case by the ultimate court of appeal had come at

last. The judges had entered and taken their seats. Charlton, pale and haggard, sat by the side of his lawyer, Detritch. Pompilard, still masking his age, entered airy as a maiden just stepping forth into Broadway in her new spring bonnet. He wore a paletot of light gray, a choker girt by a sky-blue silk ribbon, a white vest, checked pantaloons, and silk stockings under low-cut patent-leather shoes. Taking a seat at a little semicircular table near his lawyers, he exchanged repartees with them, and then tranquilly abided his fate. Charlton looked with anguish on the composure of his antagonist.

Just as the case was expected to come on, one of the judges was found to have left a certain document at home. They all retired, and a messenger was sent for the important paper. Hence a delay of an hour. Charlton could not conceal his agitation. Pompilard took up the morning journal, and read with sorrow of the death of an old friend.

"Poor old Toussaint! I see he has left us," said Pompilard.

"Yes," replied Girard, "All-Saint has gone. He was well-named. He has never held up his head since he lost his wife."

"Toussaint was a gentleman, every inch of him," said Pompilard. "He believed in the elevation of the black man, not by that process of absorption or amalgamation which some of our noodles recommend, but by his showing in his life and character that a negro can be as worthy and capable of freedom as a white man. He was for keeping the blacks socially separate from the whites, though one before the law, and teaching them to be content with the colour God had given them. A brave fellow was Toussaint. I remember—that was before your day—when the yellow fever prevailed here. Maiden Lane and the lower parts of the city were almost deserted. But Toussaint used to cross the barricades every day to tend on the sick and dying, and carry them food and medicine."

"Did you know him well?" asked Girard.

"Intimately, these thirty years. In his demeanour exquisitely courteous and respectful, there was never the slightest tinge of servility. You could not have known him as I did without forgetting his colour and feeling honoured in the companionship of a man so thoroughly generous, pious, and sincere. He would sometimes make playful allusions to his colour. He seemed much

amused once by my little Netty, who, when she was about three years old, said to him, after looking him steadily in the face for some time, "Toussaint, do you live in a black house?" The other day, knowing he was quite ill, my wife called on him, and while by his bedside asked him if she should close a window, the light of which shone full in his face. 'O non, madam,' he replied, 'car alors je serai trop noir.' "*

Here Pompilard ceased and looked up. There was a stir in the court room. Their Honours had re-entered and taken seats. The messenger with the missing paper had returned. The presiding judge, after a long and tantalizing preamble, in the course of which Charlton was alternately elevated and depressed, at length summed up, in a few intelligible words, the final decision of the court. Charlton fainted.

Pompilard's lawyers bent down their heads, as if certain papers suddenly demanded their close scrutiny; but Pompilard himself was radiant. Everybody stared at him, and handsomely did he baffle everybody by his imperturbable good humour. It is not every day that one has an opportunity of

* "Oh no, madam, for then I shall be too black." A life of Toussaint, by Mrs. George Lee, was published in Boston some years since.

seeing how a fellow-being is affected by the winning or the losing of a million of dollars. No one could have guessed from Pompilard's appearance whether he had won or lost. Unfortunately he had lost; and Charlton had reached the acme of his hopes, mortal or immortal—he was a millionaire.

Pompilard took the news home to his wife in the little old double house at Harlem; and her only comment was: "Poor dear Melissa! I had hoped to make her a present of a furnished cottage on the North River."

The conversation was immediately turned to the subject of Toussaint, and one would have thought, hearing these strange foolish people talk, that the old negro's exit saddened them far more than the loss of their fortune. Angelica, Pompilard's widowed daughter, entered. After her came Netty, the elf, now almost a young lady. She carried under her arm a portfolio, filled with such drawings of ships, beaches, and rocks as she could find in occasional excursions to Long Island, under the patronage of Mrs. Maloney, the tailor's wife.

Julia and Mary Ireton, daughters of Angelica, came in.

"Which of my little nieces will take my portfolio up-stairs?" asked Netty.

"I will, aunt," said the dutiful Mary; and off she ran with it.

"Poor Melissa! We shall now have to put off the wedding," sighed Angelica, on learning the result of the lawsuit.

"No such thing! It sha'n't be put off!" said Pompilard.

Netty threw her arms round the old man's neck, kissed him, and exclaimed: "Bravo, father of mine! Stick to that! It isn't half lively enough in this house. We want a few more here to make it jolly. Why can't we have such high times as they have in at the Maloneys'? There we made such a noise the other night that the police knocked at the door."

Maloney, by the way, be it recorded, had, under the pupilage of Pompilard, given up strong drink and wife-beating, and risen to be a tailor of some fashionable note. Pompilard had found out for him an excellent cutter—had kept him posted in regard to the fashions—and then had gone round the city to all the clubs, hotels, and opera-houses, blowing for Maloney with all his lungs. He didn't "hesitate to declare" that Maloney was the only man in the country who could fit you decently to pantaloons. Pantaloons were his *specialité*.

His cutter was a born genius—"an Englishman, sir, whose grandfather used to cut for the famous Brummel—you've heard of Brummel?" The results of all this persistent blowing were astonishing. Soon the superstition prevailed in Wall Street and along the Fifth Avenue, that if one wanted pantaloons he must go to Maloney. Haynes was excellent for dress-coats and sacks; but don't let him hope to compete with Maloney in pantaloons. You would hear young fops discussing the point with intensest earnestness and enthusiasm.

How many fortunes have a basis quite as airy and unsubstantial! Soon Maloney's little shop was crowded with customers. He was obliged to take a large and showy establishment in Broadway. Here prosperity insisted on following him. Wealth began to flow steadily in. He found himself on the plain, high road to fortune; and by whom but Pompilard had he been led there? The consequence was perpetual gratitude on the tailor's part, evinced in daily sending home, with his own marketing, enough for the other half of the house; evinced also in the determination to stick to Harlem till his benefactor would consent to leave.

While the Pompilards were discussing the

matter of the wedding, Melissa and Purling entered from a walk. Melissa carried her years very well; though hope deferred had written anxiety on her amiable features. Purling was a slim, gentlemanly person, always affecting good spirits, though certain little silvery streaks in the side-locks over his ears showed that time and care were beginning their inevitable work. In aspiring to authorship he had not thought it essential that he should consume gin like Byron, or whiskey like Charles Lamb, or opium like De Quincey. But if there be an avenging deity presiding over the wrongs of undone publishers, Purling must be doomed to some unquiet nights. There was something sublime in the pertinacity with which he kept on writing after the public had snubbed him so repeatedly by utter neglect, something still more sublime in the faith which led publishers to fall into the nets he so industriously wove for them.

The result of the lawsuit being made known to the new-comers, Melissa, hiding her face, at once left the room, and was followed by her sisters and step-mother.

Purling keenly felt the embarrassment of his position. Pompilard came to his relief. "We

have concluded, my dear fellow," said he, "not to put off the wedding. Don't concern yourself about money-matters. You can come and occupy Melissa's room with her till I get on my legs once more. I shall go to work in earnest now this lawsuit is off my hands."

"My dear sir," said Purling, "you are very generous — very indulgent. The moment my books begin to pay, what is mine shall be yours; and if you can conveniently accommodate me for a few months, till the work I'm now writing is" —

"Accommodate you? Of course we can! The more the merrier," interrupted Pompilard. "So it's settled. The wedding comes off next Wednesday."

And the wedding came off according to the programme. It took place in church. Pompilard was in his glory. Cards had been issued to all his friends of former days. Many had conveniently forgotten that such a person existed; but there were some noble exceptions, as there generally are in such cases. Presents of silver, of dresses, books, furniture, and pictures were sent in from friends both of the bride and bridegroom; so that the *trousseau* presented a very respectable ap-

pearance; but the prettiest gift of the occasion was a little porte-monnaie, containing a check for two thousand dollars, signed by Pat Maloney.

As for Charlton, young in years, if not in heart, good-looking, a widower unencumbered with a child, what was there he might not aspire to with his twelve hundred thousand dollars ?

He was taken in charge by the J——s, and the M——s, and the P——s, and introduced into "society." Yes, that is the proper name for "our set." A competition, outwardly calm, but internally bitter and intense, was entered upon by fashionable mothers having daughters to provide for. Charlton became the sensation man of the season. "Will he marry?" That was now the agitating question that convulsed all the maternal councils within a mile's radius of the new Fifth Avenue Hotel.

CHAPTER III.

THE UNITIES DISREGARDED.

Blessed are they who see, and yet believe not !
 Yea, blest are they who look on graves, and still
 Believe none dead ; who see proud tyrants ruling,
 And yet believe not in the strength of Evil.

Leopold Schefer.

THE admirers of Aristotle must bear with us while we take a little liberty—that, namely, of violating all the unities.

Fourteen years had slipped by since the great steamboat accident ; fourteen years, pregnant with forces, and prolific of events, to the far-reaching influence of which no limit can be set.

In those years a mechanic named Marshall, while building a saw-mill for Captain Sutter in California, had noticed a glistening substance at the bottom of the sluice. Thence the beginning of the great exodus from the old States, which

soon peopled the auriferous region, and in five years made San Francisco one of the world's great cities.

In those years the phenomena, by some called spiritual, of which our friend Peek had got an inkling, excited the attention of many thousand thinkers both in America and Europe. In France these manifestations attracted the investigation of the Emperor himself, and won many influential believers, among them Delamarre, editor of "La Patrie." In England they found advocates among a small but educated class; while the Queen's consort, the good and great Prince Albert, was too far advanced on the same road to find even novelty in what Swedenborg and Wesley had long before prepared him to regard as among the irregular developments of spirit power.

"Humbug and idiocy!" cried the doctors.

"A cracking of the toe-joints!" said Conjuror Anderson.

"A scientific trick!" insisted Professor Faraday.

"Spirits are the last thing I'll give into," said Sir David Brewster.

"Oh, ye miserable mystics!" cried the eloquent Ferrier, "have ye bethought yourselves of the

backward and downward course which ye are running into the pit of the bestial and the abhorred?"

"How very undignified for a spirit to rap on tables and talk commonplace!" objected the transcendentalists, who looked for Orphic sayings and Delphian profundities.

To all which the investigators replied: We merely take facts as we find them. The conjurors and the professors failed to account for what we see and hear. Sir David may give or refuse what name he pleases: the phenomena remain. Professor Ferrier may wax indignant; but his indignation does not explain why tables, guitars, and tumblers of water are lifted and carried about by invisible and impenetrable intelligent forces. We are sorry the manifestations do not please our transcendental friends. Could we have our own way, these spirits, forces, intelligences—call them what you will—should talk like Carlyle and deport themselves like Grandison. Could we have our own way, there should be no rattlesnakes, no copperheads, no mad dogs. 'Tis a great puzzle to us why Infinite Power allows such things. We do not see the use of them, the *cui bono*? Still we accept the fact of their existence. And so we do of what, in the lack of a name less vague, we

call *spirits*. There are many drunkards, imbeciles, thieves, hypocrites, and traitors, who quit this life. According to the transcendental theory, these ought to be converted at once, by some magical *presto-change*! into saints and sages, their identity wholly merged or obliterated. If the All-Wise One does not see it in that light, we cannot help it. If He can afford to wait, we shall not impatiently rave. It would seem that the Eternal chariot-wheels must continue to roll and flash on, however professors, conjurors, and quarterly reviewers may burn their poor little hands by trying to catch at the spokes.

"I did not bargain for this," grumbles the habitual novel reader, resentfully throwing down our book.

Bear with us yet a moment longer, injured friend.

During these same fourteen years of which we have spoken, the Slave Power of the South having, through the annexation of Texas, plunged the country into a war with Mexico for the extension of the area of slavery, met its first great rebuff in the establishment of California as a Free State of the Union.

The Fugitive Slave-Bill was given in 1850 to

appease the slaveholding caste. Soon afterwards followed the repeal of that Missouri Compromise which had prohibited slavery north of a certain line. It was hoped that these two concessions would prove such a tub thrown to the whale as would divert him from mischief.

Then came the deadly struggle for supremacy in Kansas; pro-slavery ruffianism, on the one side, striving to dedicate the virgin soil to the uses of slavery; and the spirit of freedom, on the other side, resisting the profanation. The contest was long, doubtful, and bloody; but freedom, thank God! prevailed in the end. Slavery thus came to grief a second time; for the lords of the lash well knew that to circumscribe their system was to doom it, and that without ever new fields for extension it could not live and prosper.

One John Brown, of Ossawatimie, in Kansas, during these years having learnt what it was to come under the ban of the Slave Power—having been hunted, hounded, shot at, and had a son brutally murdered by the devilish hate, born of slavery, and engendering such dastardly butchers as Quantrell—resolved to do what little service he could to God and man, by trying to wipe out an

injustice that had long enough outraged heaven and earth. With less than fifty picked men he seized on Harper's Ferry, held it for some days, and threw Old Virginia into fits. He was seized and hung; and many good men approved the hanging; but in little more than a year afterwards, John Brown's soul was "marching on" in the song of the Northern soldiery going South to battle against rebellion, until the very Charleston where his gallows was set up, was made to ring with the terrible refrain in his honour, the echoes of which are now audible in every State, from Maine to Louisiana.

Slavery first showed its ungloved hand at the Democratic Convention at Charleston in 1860 for the nomination of President. Here it was that Stephen A. Douglas, the very man who had given to the South as a boon the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, was rejected by the Southern conspirators against the Union, and John C. Breckenridge, the potential and soon actual traitor, was put in nomination as the extreme pro-slavery candidate against Douglas. And thus the election of Abraham Lincoln, the candidate pledged against slavery extension, was secured.

This election "is not the cause of secession, but

the opportunity," said Mr. Robert Barnwell Rhett, of South Carolina. "Slavery shall be the corner-stone of our new Confederacy," said Mr. A. H. Stephens, Confederate Vice-President, who a few weeks before, namely, in January, 1861, had said in the Georgia Convention: "For you to attempt to overthrow such a government as this, under which we have lived for more than three quarters of a century, with unbounded prosperity, and rights unassailed, is the height of madness, folly, and wickedness, to which I can neither lend my sanction nor my vote."

After raising armies for seizing Washington and for securing the border States to Slavery, Mr. Jefferson Davis, President of the improvised Confederacy, proclaimed to an amused and admiring world, "All we want is to be let alone."

Peaceful reader of the year 1875 (pardon the presumption that bids us hope such a reader will exist) bear with us for these digressions. In your better day let us hope all these terrible asperities will have passed away. But, while we write, our country's fate hangs poised. It is her great historic hour. Daily do our tears fall for the wounded or the slain. Daily do we regret that we, too, cannot give something better than words,

thicker than tear drops, to our country. But thus, through blood and anguish and purifying sufferings, is God leading us to that better future which you shall enjoy.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WHITE SLAVE.

Because, immortal, therefore is indulged
 This strange regard of deities to dust;
 Hence, Heaven looks down on Earth with all her eyes;
 Hence, the soul's mighty moment in her sight;
 Hence, every soul has partisans above,
 And every thought a critic in the skies.

Young.

The creature is great to whom it is allowed to imagine questions to which only a God can reply.—*Aimé Martin.*

No one who has travelled largely through the Southern States will require to be told that the slave system sanctions the holding in slavery of persons who are undistinguishable in complexion from the whitest Anglo-Saxons. Several carefully authenticated cases, analogous to that developed in our story, though surpassing it in unspeakable baseness, have been recently brought to light. We need only hint at them at this stage of our narrative.

The reader has already divined that the little girl sold at the slave-auction, and placed under Mrs. Gentry's care, was no other than the unfortunate child whose parents were lost in the disaster of the Pontiac.

There is a class of minds which, either from inertness or lack of leisure, never revise the opinions they have received from others. If we might borrow a fresh illustration from Mrs. Gentry's copy-books we might say that in her mental growth the tree was inclined precisely as the twig had been bent. She honestly believed that there was no appeal from what her sire, the judge, had once laid down as law or gospel. Having been bred in the belief that slavery was a wholesome and sacred institution, she would probably have seen her own sister dragged under it to the auction-block, and not have ventured to question the righteousness of the act.

There were only two passions which, should they ever come in direct collision with her veneration for slavery, might possibly override it; but even on this there seemed to rest much uncertainty. Her acquisitiveness, as the phrenologists would have called it, was large; and then, although she was fast declining into the sere and yellow

leaf, she had not surrendered all hope of one day finding a successor to the late Mr. Gentry in her affections.

Regarding poor little Clara Berwick (or Ellen Murray) as a slave, she could never be so far moved by the child's winning presence and ways as to look on her as entitled to the same atmosphere and sun as herself. No infantile grace, no solicitation of affection, could ever melt the icy barrier with which the pride and self-seeking, fostered by slavery, had encircled the heart, not naturally bad, of the schoolmistress. And yet she did her duty by the child to the best of her ability.

Though not a highly educated person, Mrs. Gentry was shrewd enough to employ for her pupils the most accomplished teachers, and in respect to Clara, she faithfully carried out Mr. Ratcliff's directions. True, she always exacted an obedience that was unquestioning and blind. She did not care to see that the child could have been led by a silken thread, only satisfy her reason, or appeal to her affections. And so it was to Esha that Clara would always have to go for sympathy, both in her sorrows and her joys; and it was Esha whose influence was felt in the very depths of that fresh and sensitive nature.

From her third to her fourteenth year, Clara gave little promise of beauty. Ratcliff, on receiving her photographs, used to throw them aside with a "Psha! After all, she'll be fit only for a household drudge"

But as she emerged into her sixteenth year, and features and form began to develop the full meaning of their outlines, she all at once appeared in the new and startling phase of a rare model of incipient womanhood. Her hair, thick and flowing, was of a softened brown tint, which yet was distinct from that cognate hue *abrun* (a-brown) or auburn, a shade suggestive of red. Her complexion was clear and pure, though not of that brilliant pink and white often associated with delicacy of constitution. A profile, delicately cut as if to be the despair of sculptors; a forehead not high, but high enough to show Mind enthroned there; eyes—it was not till you drew quite near, that you marked the peculiarity already described in the infant of the Pontiac. The mouth and lips were small and passionate, the chin bold, yet not protrusive, the nostrils having that indescribable curve which often makes this feature surpass all the others in giving a character of decision to a face. A man of the turf would have summed up

his whole description of the girl in the one word "blood."

Such a union of the sensuous nature with pure will and intellect might well have made a watchful parent tremble for her future.

Ratcliff had been for more than a year in South Carolina, helping to fire the Southern heart, and forward the secession movement. Early in January, 1861, he made a flying visit to New Orleans, and called on Mrs. Gentry.

After some conversation on public affairs, the lady asked, "Would you like to see my pupil?"

"Not if she resembles the photographs you've sent me," replied Ratcliff. Then, looking at his watch, he added: "I leave for Charleston this afternoon, and haven't time to see her now. Early in March I shall be back, and will call then."

"You must see her a minute," said Mrs. Gentry. "I think you'll admit she does no discredit to my bringing up." And she rang the bell.

"Tell Miss Murray I desire her presence in the parlour."

Clara entered. She was attired in a plain robe of slate-coloured muslin, exquisitely fitted, and had a book in her hand, as if just interrupted in study.

She stood inquiringly before the schoolmistress, and seemed unconscious of another's presence.

"I wish you, Miss Murray, to play for this gentleman. Play the piece you last learnt."

Without the slightest shyness, Clara obeyed, seating herself at the piano, and performing Schubert's delectable "*Lob der Thränen*" (Eulogy of Tears), with Liszt's arrangement. This she did with an executive facility and precision of touch that would have charmed a competent judge, which Ratcliff was not.

And yet astonishment made him speechless. He had expected an undeveloped, awkward, homely girl. Lo, a beautiful young woman whose perfect composure and grace were such as few queens of society could exhibit! And all that youth and loveliness were his!

He looked at his watch. Not another moment could he remain. He drew near to Clara and took her hand, which she quickly withdrew. "Only maiden coyness," thought he, and said: "We must be better acquainted. But I must now hasten from your dangerous society, or I shall miss the steamer. Good by, my dear. Good by, Mrs. Gentry. You shall hear from me very soon."

And Mrs. Gentry rang the bell, and black Tarquin opened the door for Ratcliff. As it closed upon him, "Who is that old man?" asked Clara.

"Old? Why, he doesn't look a year over forty," replied Mrs. Gentry. "That's the rich Mr. Ratcliff."

"Well, I detest him," said Clara emphatically.

"Detest!" exclaimed Mrs. Gentry, horror-stricken; for it was not often that Clara condescended to speak her mind so freely to that lady. "Detest! Is this the end of all my moral and religious teachings? O, but you'll be *come up with* if you go on in this way. Retire to your room, Miss."

Swiftly and gladly Clara obeyed.

Apropos of the aforesaid teachings, Ratcliff was very willing that his predestined victim should be piously inclined. It would rather add to the piquancy of her degradation. He wavered somewhat as to whether she should be a Protestant or a Catholic, but finally left the whole matter to Mrs. Gentry. That profound theologian had done her best to lead Clara into her own select fold, and, as she thought, had succeeded; but Clara was pretty sure to take up opinions the reverse of those held by her teacher. So, after

sitting in weariness of spirit under the ministry of the Rev. Dr. Palmer in the morning, the perverse young lady would ventilate her religious conceptions by reading Fenelon, Madame Guyon, or Zschokke in the evening.

Mrs. Gentry believed in secession, and raved like a pythoness against the cowardly Yankees. Clara, seeing a United States flag trampled on and torn in the street, secured a rag of it, secretly washed it, and placed it as a holy symbol on her bosom. Mrs. Gentry expatiated to her pupils on the righteousness and venerableness of slavery. Clara cut out from a pictorial paper a poor little dingy picture of Fremont, and concealed it between two leaves of her Bible, underlining on one of them these words: "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof."

Esha, the coloured cook, a slave, was Clara's fast friend in all her youthful troubles. Esha had passed through all degrees of slavery—from toiling in a cotton field to serving as a lady's maid. Having had a child, a little girl, taken from her and sold, she ever afterwards refused to be again a mother. The straight hair, coppery hue, and somewhat Caucasian cast of features of this slave showed that she belonged to a race different from

that of the ordinary negro. She had been named Ayesha, after one of Mahomet's wives. She generally wore a Madras handkerchief about her head, and showed a partiality for brilliant colours. Many were the stealthy interviews that she and Clara enjoyed together.

Said Esha, on one of these occasions: "Don't b'leeb 'em, darlin', when dey say de slabe am berry happy, an' all dat. No slabe dat hab any sense am happy. He know, he do, dat suffn's tuk away from him dat God gabe him, and meant he sh'd hole on ter; and so he feel ollerz kind o' mean afore God an' man too; an' I 'fy anybody, white or black, to be happy who feel dat ar way."

"But it isn't the slave's fault, Esha, that he's a slave."

"It's de slabe's fault dat he stay a slabe, darlin'," said the old woman, with a strange kindling of the eyes. "But den de massa hab de raisin' ob him, and so take good car' ter break down all dar am of de man in de poor slabe; an' de poor slabe hab no larnin', and dunno whar' to git a libbin or how to sabe hisself from starvin'. An' if he run away, de people Norf send him back."

On studying Esha further, Clara discovered that

she was half Mahometan, and could speak Arabic. Her mixed notions she had got partly from her father, Amri, who belonged to one of those African tribes who cultivate a pure deism, tempered only by faith in the mission of Mahomet as an inspired prophet. Amri had been captured by a hostile tribe and sold into slavery. He lived long enough to teach his little Esha some things which she remembered. She could repeat several Arabic poems, and Clara first became familiar with the Arabian Nights through this old household drudge. One of these poems had a mystical charm for Clara. Through the illiterate garb which the slave's English gave it, Clara detected a significance that led her to write out a paraphrase in the following words:—

“The sick man lay on his bed of pain. ‘Allah!’ he moaned; and his heart grew tender, and his eyes moist, with prayer.

“The next morning the tempter said to him: ‘No answer comes from Allah. Call louder, still no Allah will hear thee or ease thy pain.’

“The sick man shuddered. His heart grew cold with doubt and inquietude; when suddenly before him stood Elias.

“‘Child!’ said Elias, ‘why art thou sad? Dost think thy prayers are unheard and unanswered? that thy devotion is all in vain?’

"And the sick man replied : ' Ah ! so often, and with such tears I have called on Allah ! I call *Allah* ! but never do I hear his " Here am I ! " ' "

"And Elias left the sick man ; but God said to Elias : ' Go to the tempted one ; lift him up from his despair and unbelief.

" ' Tell him that his very longing is its own fulfilment ; that his very prayer, " Come, Allah ! " is Allah's answer, " Here am I ! " ' "

"Yes, every good aspiration is an angel straight from God. Say from the heart, ' O my Father ! ' and that very utterance is the Father's reply, ' Here, my child ! ' " *

Like many native Africans, Esha was fully assured of the existence of spirits, and of their power, in exceptional cases, to manifest themselves to mortals. And she related so many facts within her own experience, that Clara became a believer on human testimony—the more readily because Esha's faith in demonism was unmixed with superstition.

"Tell me, Esha," said Clara, at one of their secret midnight conferences, "were you ever whipped ?"

"Never badly, darlin'. It ain't de whippins and de suf'rins dat make de wrong ob slabery. De

* By Dscheladeddin, a famous Mahometan mystic.

mos kindest ting dey could do de slabe would be ter treat him so he wouldn't stay a slabe no how. But dey know jes how fur to go, widout stirrin' up de man inside ob him. An' dat's the cuss ob slabery."

"But, Esha, don't they generally treat the women well on the plantations?"

"De breedin' women dey treat well—speshilly jes afore dar time*—but I've known a pregnant woman whipped so she died de same night. O de poor bressed lily ob de world! O de angel from hebbn! O de sweet lubly chile! Nebber, no, nebber, nebber shall I disremember how I held de little gole cross afore dat chile's eyes, an' how she die wid de smile on her sweet face, and her own husband's head on her bosom."

And the old woman burst into a passion of tears, rocking herself to and fro, and living over again the sorrow of that death-bed scene to which she and Peek and one other, years before, had been witnesses.

Clara pacified her, and Esha said, "You jes stop one minute, darlin', and I'll show yer suff'n."

* On the contrary, Mrs. Kemble says they are cruelly treated, and that the forms of suffering are "manifold and terrible" in consequence.

She went to her garret-closet, and returned with a small silk bag, from which she took a package done up in fine linen. This she unpinned, and displayed a long strand of human hair, thick, silky, soft, and of a peculiarly beautiful colour, hardly olive, yet reminding one of that hue. Holding it up, she said: "Dar! Dat's de hair I cut from de head of dat same bressed chile I jes tell yer 'bout."

"But that is the hair of a white woman," said Clara.

"Bress yer, darlin', she war jes as white as you am dis minute."

After some seconds of silence, Clara said, "Tell me of her."

And Esha related many, though not all, of the particulars already familiar to the reader in the story of Estelle.

"Esha, you must give me some of that hair," said Clara.

"Yes, darlin', I'll change half of it fur some ob yourn."

The exchange was made, Clara wrapping her portion in the little strip of bunting torn from the American flag.

On the subject of her birth Clara had put to

Mrs. Gentry some searching questions, but had learnt simply that her parentage was unknown. For her concealed benefactor she had conceived a romantic attachment; and gratitude incited her to make the best of her opportunities, and to patiently bear her chagrins.

A month after the late interview with Ratcliff, Mrs. Gentry received a letter which caused Clara to be summoned to her presence.

"Sit down. I've something important to communicate," said the schoolmistress. "You've often asked me to whom you are indebted for your support. Learn now that you belong to Mr. Carberry Ratcliff, whom you met here some weeks ago. He is the rich planter whose house and grounds in Lafayette you've often admired."

"*Belong* to him?" cried Clara. "What do you mean? Am I his daughter? Am I in any way related?"

"No, you're his slave. He bought you at auction."

Impulsive as her own mocking-bird by nature, Clara had learned that cruel lesson, which gifted children are often compelled to acquire when subjected to the rule of inferior minds—the art, namely, of checking and disguising the emotions.

Excepting a quivering of her lips, a flushing of her brow, a slight heaving of her bosom, and a momentary expression as of deadly sickness in her face, she did not betray, by outward signs, the intensity of that feeling of disgust, hate, and indignation which Mrs. Gentry's communication had aroused.

"Did Mr. Ratcliff request you to inform me that he considered me his slave?" she asked, in a tone which, by a strenuous effort, she divested of all significance.

"Yes; he concluded you are now of an age to understand the responsibilities of your real situation. He not only paid a price for you when you were yet an infant, but he has maintained you ever since. But for him you might have been toiling in the sun on a plantation. But for him you might never have had an education. But for him you might never have heard of salvation through Christ. But for him you might never have had the privilege of attending the Rev. Dr. Palmer's Sunday-school. Is there any sacrifice too great for you to make for such a master? Would it be too much for you to lay down your life for him? Speak!"

Mrs. Gentry, it will be seen, pursued the So-

cratic method of impressing truth upon her pupils. As Clara made no reply to her interrogatories, she continued: "As your instructress, it has been my object to make you feel sensibly the importance of doing your duty in whatever sphere you may be cast."

"And what, madame, may be the duty of a slave?" interposed Clara, stifling down and masking the rage of her heart.

"The duty of a slave," said Mrs. Gentry, "is to obey her master. Prompt and unhesitating obedience, that is her duty."

"Obedience to any and every command-- is that what you mean, madame?"

"Unquestionably it is."

"And must I not exercise my reason as to what is right or wrong?"

"Your reason, under slavery, is subordinated to another's. You must not set up your own reason against your master's."

"Supposing my master should order me to stab or poison you—ought I to do it?"

The judge's daughter, like all who venture to vindicate the leprous wrong on moral grounds, found herself nonplussed.

"You suppose a ridiculous and improbable case," she replied.

"Well, madame, let me state a fact. One of your pupils had a letter yesterday from a sister in Alabama, who wrote that a slave woman had killed herself under these circumstances : her master had compelled her to unite herself in so-called marriage with a black man, though she fully believed a former husband still lived. To escape the abhorred consequence, she put an end to her life. Was that woman right or wrong in opposing her master's will ?"

"How can you ask?" returned Mrs. Gentry, reproachfully. "'Tis the slave's duty to marry as the master orders."

"Even though her husband be living, do I understand you?"

"Undoubtedly. Ministers of the Gospel will tell you, if there's wrong in it, the master, not the slave, is to blame." *

"I thank you for making the slave's duty so clear. You're quite sure Dr. Palmer would approve your view?"

"Entirely. All his preaching on the subject convinces me of it."

* The Savannah River Baptist Association of Ministers decreed (1836) that the slave, sold at a distance from his home, was not to be countenanced by the Church in resisting his master's will that he should take a new wife.

"And the woman, you think, who killed herself rather than be false to her husband, could never go to heaven?"

"No, I never believe she could. She must have been a poor heathen creature, wholly ignorant of Scripture. Paul commands slaves to obey; and the woman who wilfully violates his injunction does it at the peril of her soul."

Clara was silent; and Mrs. Gentry, felicitating herself on the powerful moral lesson adapted to her pupil's "new sphere of duty," resumed, "By the way, your master—"

"Master!" shrieked Clara, running with up-raised hands to Mrs. Gentry, as if to dash them down on her. Then, suddenly checking herself, she said pleasantly: "You see I'm a little unused to the name. What were you going to say?"

"Really, child, one would think you were out of your wits. It isn't as if you were going to be consigned to a master who'd abuse you. There's many a poor girl in our first society who'd be glad to be taken care of as you'll be. Only think of it! Here's a beautiful diamond ring for you. And here's a check for five hundred dollars for you to spend in dresses, and you're to have the selecting of them all yourself—think of that!—under my

superintendence, of course ; but Madame Groux tells me your taste is excellent, and I shall not interfere. 'Tis now nine o'clock. We'll drive out this very forenoon to see what there is in the shops ; for Mr. Ratcliff may be here any hour now. Run and get ready, that's a good girl. The carriage shall be here at half-past ten."

Without touching, or even looking at, the ring, Clara ran upstairs to her room, and, locking the door, knelt, with flushed burning brow and brain, at a little *prie-dieu* in the corner. She did not try to put her prayer in words, for the emotions which swelled within her bosom were all unspeakable. Clara was intellectually a mystic, but the current of her individualism was too strong to be diverted from its course by ordinary influences, whether from spirits *in* or *out* of the flesh. She was too positive to be constrained by other impulses than those which her own will, enlightened by her own reason, had generated. So, while she felt assured that angelic witnesses were round about her, and that her every thought "had a critic in the skies"—and while she believed that, in one sense, nothing of mind or body was truly her own—that she was but a vessel or recipient—she keenly experienced the consciousness that she was

a free, responsible agent. O mystery beyond all fathoming! O reconciliation of contrarieties which only Omnipotence could effect, and only Omnipotence can explain!

She paced the floor of her little room—looked her situation unflinchingly in the face—and resolved, with God's help, to gird herself for the strife. Her unknown benefactor, whom her imagination had so exalted, ah! how poor a thing, hollow and corrupt, he had proved! Could she ever forgive the man who had dared claim her as his slave?

And yet might she not misjudge him? Might he not be plotting some generous surprise? She recalled a single expression of his face, and felt satisfied she did him no injustice. How hateful now seemed all those accomplishments she had acquired! They were but the gilding of an abhorred chain.

In the midst of her whirling thoughts, her mocking-bird, which had been pecking at some crumbs in his cage, burst into such a wild *jubilate* of song, that Clara's attention was withdrawn for a moment even from her own great grief. Opening the door of the cage, she said: "Come, Dainty, you too shall be free. The window is open. Go

find a pleasant home among the trees and on the plantations.”

The bird flew about her head, and alighted on her forefinger, as it had been accustomed. Clara pressed the down of its neck to her cheek, and then, taking the little songster to the window, threw it off her finger. Dainty flew back into the room, and, alighting on Clara's head, pecked at her hair.

“Naughty Dainty! Good by, my pet! We must part. Freedom is best for both you and me.” And, putting her head out of the window, Clara brushed Dainty off into the airy void, and closed the glass against the bird's return.

She now summoned Esha, and said: “Esha, we've often wondered as to my true place in the world. The mystery is solved to-day. Mrs. Gentry informs me I'm a slave.”

“What! Wha-a-a-t! You? You, too, a slabe? My little darlin' a slabe? O, de good Lord in hebbn won't 'low dat!”

“We've but a moment for talk, Esha. Help me to act. My owner (owner!) may be here any minute.”

“Who am dat owner?”

“Mr. Carberry Ratcliff.”

"No—no—no! Not dat man! Not him! De Lord help de dare chile if dat born debble wunst git hole ob her!"

"What do you know of him?"

"He war de cruel massa ob dat slabe gal whom you hab de hair ob in yer bosom."

"I'm glad of it!" cried Clara, throwing her clenched hand in the air, and looking up as if to have the heavens hear her.

"O, darlin' chile, what am dar ole Esha kn do for her?"

Clara stopped short, and, pressing both hands on her forehead, stood as if calling her best thoughts to a council of war, and then said, "Can you get me a small valise, Esha?"

"Hab a carpet bag I kn gib her. You jes wait one minute." And Esha returned with the desired article.

"Now help me pack. Mrs. Gentry expects me soon to go a-shopping with her. When she calls for me, I shall be missing. I've not yet made up my mind where to go. I shall think on that as I walk along. What's the matter, Esha? What do you stare at?"

"Look dar! What yer see dar, darlin'?"

"A pair of little sleeve-buttons. How pretty!"

Gold with a setting of coral. And on the inside, in tiny letters, C. A. B."

"Wall, dat's de 'stonishin'est ting I'ze seen dis many a day. Ten—no, 'lebben—no, fourteen yars ago, as I war emptyin' suds out ob de wash-tub, I see dese little buttons shinin' on de groun'. 'Twas de Monday arter you was browt here. Your little underclose had been in de wash. So what does I do but put de buttons in my pocket, tinkin' I'd gib 'em ter missis ter keep fur yer. But whan I look for 'em, dey was clean gone—couldn't fine 'em nowhar. So I say notin' t' all 'bout it. Jes now, as I tuk up fro' my trunk a little muslin collar dat de dare saint I tell yer 'bout used ter wear, what sh'd drop from de foles but dis same little pair ob buttons dat I hab'nt seen fur all dese yars. Take 'em, darlin', fur dey 'long ter you an' ter nobody else."

"Thank you, Esha. I'll keep them with my other treasures;" and Clara fastened them with a pin to the piece of bunting in her bosom. "And now, good by. Pray for me, Esha."

"Night and day, darlin'. But Esha must gib suffn more'n prayers. Take dese twenty dollars in gold, darlin'. Yer'll want 'em, sure. Don't 'fuze 'em."

“How long have you been saving up this money, Esha?”

“Bress de chile, only tree muntz. Dat’s nuffn. You jes take ’em. Dar! Dat’s right. Tie ’em up safe in de corner ob yer hankerchy.”

“But, Esha, you may not be paid back till you get to heaven.” And Clara put on her bonnet, and spoke rapidly to choke down a sob.

“So much de better. Dar! Put ’em safe in yer pocket. Dat’s a good chile.”

“Fearing a refusal would only grieve the old woman, Clara received and put away the gold pieces. Then, closing the spring of the carpet bag, she kissed Esha, and said, “If they inquire for me, balk them as well as you can.”

“Leeb me alone fur dat, darlin’. An’ now yer mus’ go. De Lord an’ his proppet bless yer! Allah keep yer! De mudder ob God watch ober yer!”

In these ejaculations Esha would hardly have been held as orthodox either by a mufti or a D.D. But what if, in the balance of the All-Seeing, the sincere heart should outweigh the speculative head? Poor old Esha was Mahometan through reverence for her father; Catholic through influences from the family with whom she lived when a child; and Protestant through knowledge of

many good men and women of that faith. She cared not how many saints there were in her calendar. The more the merrier. All goodness in man or woman, of whatever race or sect, was deified in her simple and semi-barbarous conceptions. Poor, ignorant, sinful, unregenerate creature !

“ God bless you, Esha ! ” said Clara. “ Look ! There is poor Dainty perched on the window-sill. Plainly he is no Abolitionist. He prefers slavery. Take care of him.”

“ Dat I will, if only for your sake, darlin’.”

And the old woman let the bird in and closed the window ; and then—her bronzed face wet with tears—she conducted Clara to a back door of the house, from which the fugitive could issue, without being observed, into an obscure carriage-way.

CHAPTER V.

ENCOUNTERS AT THE ST. CHARLES.

Hail, year of God's farming! Hail, summer of an emancipated continent, which shall lay up in storehouse and barn the great truths that were worth the costly dressing of a people's blood!

Rev. Joseph Weiss,

IN one of the rooms of the St. Charles Hotel in New Orleans a man sat meditating. The windows looked out on a street where soldiers were going through their drill amid occasional shouts from bystanders. As the noise grew louder, the man rose and went to a window. He was hardly above the middle stature, slim and compact, but as lithe as if jointed like an eel. His hair was slightly streaked with gray. His features, though not full, spoke health, vigour, and pure habits of life; while his white, well-preserved teeth, neatly trimmed beard, and well-cut, well-adjusted clothes showed that, as he left his youth behind him, his attention to his personal appearance did not decrease. Fourteen years had made but little change in

Vance. It had not tamed the fire of his eyes nor slackened the alertness of his tread.

As he caught sight of the "stars and bars" waving in the spring sunlight, an expression of scorn was emitted in his frown, and he exclaimed, "Detested rag! I shall yet live to trample you in the dirt on that very spot where you now flaunt so bravely. Shout on, poor fools! Continue, ye unreasoning cattle, to crop the flowery food, and lick the hand just raised to shed your blood. And you, too, leaders of the rank and file, led, in your turn, by South Carolina fire-eaters, go on and overtake that fate denounced by the prophet on evildoers. Hug the strong delusion and believe the lie! Declare, with the smatterers of the Richmond press, that Christian civilization is a mistake, and that the new Confederacy is *a God-sent missionary to the nations* to teach them that pollution is purity, and incest a boon from heaven. The time is not far distant when you shall learn how far the Eternal Powers are the allies of human laziness, arrogance, and lust!"

Suddenly the soliloquist seemed struck by the appearance of some one in the crowd; for, taking from his pocket an opera-glass, and regulating the focus, he looked through it, then muttered, "Yes,

it is he! Poor maggot! What haughtiness in his look!"

Just then a man on horseback, in the dress of a civilian, and followed by a slave, also mounted, rode forward nearer to where Vance sat at his window. A multitude gathered round the foremost equestrian, and called for a speech. "The Kunnle is jest from South Kerlinay," exclaimed a swarthy inebriate, who seemed to be spokesman for the mob. "A speech from Kunnle Ratcliff! Hooray!"

Ratcliff, with a gesture of annoyance, rose in his stirrups, and said: "Friends, I've nothing to tell you that you can't find better told in the newspapers. This is no time for talk. We want action now. All's right at Charleston. Sumter has fallen. That's the first great step. The Yankees may bluster, but they'll never fight. The meanest white man at the South is more than a match for any five Yankees. We'll have them begging to be let into our Southern Confederacy before Christmas. But we won't receive them. No! As Jeff Davis well says, sooner hyenas than Yankees! But we must whip them into decency. And so, before the next 4th of July, we mean to have our flag flying over Faneuil Hall. We are the master race

my friends ! We must show these nigger-stealing, beggarly Yankees that they must stand cap in hand when they venture to come into our presence. Don't believe the croakers who tell you slavery will be weakened by secession. It's going to be strengthened. So convinced am I of it, that I've doubled my number of slaves ; and if any of you wish to sell, bring on your niggers ! Do you see that flag ? Well, that flag has got to wave over all Mexico, Cuba, and Central America. In five years from now every man of you shall own his score of niggers and his hundred acres of land. So go ahead, and aim low when you sight a Yankee."

The speech was received with cheers, and Ratcliff started his horse ; but the leading loafer of the crowd seized the reins, and said : " Can't let yer off so, Kunnle—can't no how you kun fix it. We want a reg'lar game speech, sich as you kun make when you dam please. So fire up, and do your prettiest. Be n't we the master race ? "

" Pshaw ! Let go those reins," said Ratcliff, cutting the vagabond over his face with the butt-end of a riding-whip.

The crowd laughed, and the loafer, astonished and sobered, dropped the reins, and put his hand

to his eye, which had been badly hit. Ratcliff rode on, but a muttered curse went after him.

Seeing the loafer stand feeling of his eye as if it had been hurt, Vance said to him from the window: "Go to the apothecary's, and tell him to give you something to bathe it in."

"Go ter the 'pothecary's! With nary a red in my pocket! Strannger, don't try to fool this child."

"Here's money, if you want it."

"Money? I should like to see the colour of it, strannger."

"Hold your hat, then."

And Vance dropped into the hat something wrapped in a newspaper which the loafer incredulously unfolded. Finding in it a five-dollar gold piece, he stared first at the money, then at Vance, and said: "Strannger, I'd say, God bless yer, if I didn't think, what a poor cuss like I could say would rayther harm than help. Haven't no influence with God Almighty, strannger. But you're a man—you air—not a sneakin' 'ristocrat as despises a poor white fellow more'n he does a nigger. I've seen yer somewhar afore, but can't say whar."

"Go and attend to your eye, my friend," said Vance.

"I will. An' if ever I kun do yer a good turn, jes call on——"

Vance could not hear the name; but he bowed, and the loafer moved on. Looking in another direction, Vance saw Ratcliff dismount, throw the reins to his attendant, and disappear in a vestibule of the hotel. Vance rose and wildly paced the room. His whole frame quivered to the very tips of his fingers, which he stretched forth as if to clutch some invisible antagonist. He muttered incoherent words, and, smiting his brow as if to keep back thoughts that struggled too tumultuously for expression, cried: "O that I had him here—here, face to face—weaponless, both of us! Would I not— The merciless villain! The cowardly miscreant! To lash a woman! That moment of horror! Often as I've lived it over, it is ever new. Can eternity make it fade? Again I see her—pale, very pale and bleeding—and tied—tied to the stake. O Ratcliff! When shall this bridled vengeance overtake thee? Pshaw! What is *he*—an individual—what is the sum of pain that *he* can suffer? Would that be a requital? Will not his own devices work better for me than aught *I* can do?"

Seating himself in an arm-chair, Vance calmed

his vindictive thoughts. In memory he went back to the day when he first heard Estelle sing; then to their first evening in Mrs. Mallet's little house; then to the old magnolia-tree before it. That house he had bought and given in keeping to Mrs. Bernard, a married granddaughter of old Leroux, the Frenchman. Every tree and shrub in the area had been reverently cared for. Had not Estelle plucked blossoms from them all?

He thought of his marriage—of his pleasant walks with Estelle in Jackson Square—of their musical enjoyments—of all her little devices to minister to his comfort and delight—and then of the sudden clouding of this brief but most exquisite sunshine.

Vance took from the pocket of his vest a little circular box of rosewood. Unscrewing the cover, he revealed a photograph of Estelle, taken after her marriage. There was such a smile on the countenance as only the supreme happiness of a loving heart could have created. On the opposite circle was a curl of her hair of that strangely beautiful neutral tint which Vance had often admired. This he pressed to his lips. "Dear saint," he murmured, "I have not forgotten thy parting words. For thy sake will I wrestle with this

spirit that would seek a *paltry* revenge. Thy smile, O my beloved! shall dispel the remembrance of thy agony, and thy love shall conquer all earth-born hate. For thy dear sake will I still calmly meet thy murderer. O, lend me of thy divine patience to endure his presence! Sweet child, affectionate and pure, I can dream of nothing in heaven more precious than thyself. If from thee, O my beloved! come this spiritual refreshing and reinforcement—if from thee these tender influences, so bright and yet so gentle—then must thy sphere be one within which the angels delight to come.”

There was a knock at the door. Vance shut the box, replaced it in his pocket, and cried, “Come in!”

“Coloured man down stars, sar, wants to see yer.”

“Did he give his name?”

“Yes, sar, he say his name is Jacobs.”

“Show him up.”

A negro now entered wearing green spectacles, and a wig of gray wool. Across his cheek there was a scar. No sooner was the door closed upon the waiter, than Vance exclaimed: “Is it possible? Can this be you, Peek?”

Peek threw off his disguise, and Vance seized him by the hand as he might have seized a returning brother.

"What of your wife and child? Have you found 'em?"

"No, Mr. Vance, I'm still a wanderer over the earth in search of them. I shall find them in God's good time."

"Sit down, Peek."

"Excuse me, Mr. Vance, I'd rather stand."

"Very well. Then I'll stand too."

"Since you make it a point of politeness, sir, I'll sit."

"That's right. And now, my dear fellow, tell me what you've been about these many years. Surely you've discovered some traces of the lost ones?"

"None that have been of much use, Mr. Vance. I'm satisfied that Flora was lured on to Baltimore by some party who deceived her with the expectation of meeting me there. From Baltimore she and her child were taken to Richmond by the agent of her old master, and sold at auction to a dealer, who soon afterwards died. There the clew breaks."

"My poor Peek, your not finding her has

probably saved you from a deeper disappointment."

"What do you mean, Mr. Vance?"

"The chance is, she has been forced to marry some other man."

"I know, sir, that would be the probability in the case of ninety-nine slave-women out of a hundred. But Flora once swore to me on the crucifix she would be true to me or die. And I feel very certain she will keep her oath."

"Ah! slavery is so crafty and remorseless in working on human passions," sighed Vance. "But you are right, my dear Peek, in hoping on. Tell me of your adventures."

"When you and I parted at Memphis, Mr. Vance, I went to Montreal. Flora had left there some weeks before. At New York I sought out Mr. Charlton; also the policeman. But I could get nothing out of them. At length a Canadian told me he had met Flora on board the Baltimore boat. I followed up the clew till it broke, as I've told you. Since then I've been seeking my wife and boy all through the Cotton States. The money you gave me from Mr. Berwick lasted me seven years; and then I had to work to get the means of continuing my search. There are not many

counties in the Slave States which I have not visited."

"During your travels, Peek, you must have had opportunities of helping on the good cause."

"Yes, Mr. Vance. I needed some strong motive to send me far and wide among my poor brethren. Without it I might have led a selfish life, content with my own comforts. But God has ordered it all right. I bought a pass as an old slave preacher, and thus was able to visit the plantations, and establish secret societies in the cause of freedom. Give the slaves arms, treat them like men, and they will fight. But they will not rise unarmed in useless insurrection. As soon as the North will give them the means of defending their freedom, they will break their fetters. It is the North, and not the South, that now holds the slave in check."

"Yes, Peek; public sentiment is almost as much poisoned at the North as at the South, by this slavery virus."

"And what have *you*, sir, been about all these years?"

"Much of my time has been spent in Kansas. I've been a border ruffian."

"A sham one, I suppose?"

“Well, Peek, so seriously did I play my part, that perhaps I shall go down in history as one of the pro-slavery leaders. John Brown of Ossawatimie would at one time have shot me on sight. He afterwards understood me better—understood that, if I fraternized with the pro-slavery crew, it was to thwart their schemes. The rascals were continually astounded at finding their bloodiest secrets revealed to the Abolitionists, and little suspected that one of their most trusted advisers was the informer. Yes! I helped on the madness which God sends to those he means to destroy. Baffled in California, the devil of slavery set his heart on establishing his altars in Kansas. How effectually we have headed him off! And now the frenzied idiot wants secession and a slave empire. Heaven forbid I should arrest him in his fatuity! Let me rather help it on.”

“Are you, then, a secessionist, Mr. Vance?”

“In one sense: I’m for secession from slavery by annihilating it, holding on to the Union. I was at the great Nashville convention. I’ve been the last few months watching things here in conservative Louisiana. She will have to follow South Carolina. That little vixen among States cracks the overseer’s whip over our heads, and

threatens us with her sovereign displeasure for our timidity. She has nearly frightened poor Governor Moore out of his boots."

"I've been thinking much lately," said Peek, "of our adventure on board the Pontiac. What ever became of Colonel Delancy Hyde?"

"The Colonel," replied Vance, "for a time wooed fortune in Kansas, but didn't win her. Since then I've lost him."

"The last I heard of him," said Peek, "he had quarrelled with a fellow at a cock-fight in Montgomery, and been wounded, and his sister, a decent woman, was tending on him."

"I confess I've a weakness for the Colonel," said Vance, "though unquestionably he's a great scoundrel."

"Did you ever learn, Mr. Vance, what became of that yellow girl he coveted?"

"She and the child were drowned," was the reply.

"What proof of that did you ever have?"

"My first endeavour, after the accident," said Vance, "was to serve the man to whom I had owed my own life; and it was not till I saw you secure from Hyde, and your scalds taken care of,

I learnt from Judge Onslow that the Berwicks, husband and wife, had died from their wounds."

"Were their bodies ever recovered?"

"Those of the husband and wife I saw and recognized. But not half the bodies of the drowned were recovered, so strong was the current. It was not surprising, therefore, that the child and nurse should be of this number. Two of the passengers testified to seeing them in the river—tried ineffectually to save them, and saw them go under."

"Did you ever learn who those passengers were?"

"No. But I satisfied myself, so far as I could from human testimony, that the child was not among the saved. Business called me suddenly to New Orleans. Why do you ask?"

"Excuse me. Were you never summoned as a witness on the trial which gave Mr. Charlton the Berwick property?"

"Never. Perhaps one of the inconveniences of my *aliases* is, that my friends do not often know where to find me, or how to address me. I was not aware there had been a trial."

"Nor was I," said Peek, "until a few weeks ago. At the Exchange Hotel in Montgomery, I

waited on Captain Ireton of the army, who, learning that I had had dealings with Charlton, informed me that his (Ireton's) grandfather had been a party to a lawsuit growing out of the loss of the Pontiac, but that the case had been decided in Charlton's favour. When Captain Ireton learned that I, too, had been on the Pontiac, he put me many questions, in the course of which I learned that the evidence as to the death of the child and her nurse rested solely on the testimony of Colonel Delancy Hyde and his friend, Leonidas Quattles."

Vance started up and paced the floor, striking both palms against his forehead. "Dupe and fool that I've been!" he exclaimed. "Deep as I thought myself, this thick-skulled Hyde has been deeper still. I've been outwitted by a low rascal and blockhead. In all my talk with Hyde about the explosion, he never intimated to me that he had ever testified as a witness in a suit growing out of the accident. Never would he have kept silent on such a point if he hadn't been guilty. He and Quattles and Charlton! What possible rascality might not have been hatched among the three! Of course there was knavery! What was the amount of property in suit?"

"More than a million of dollars: so Ireton told me."

"A million? The father and mother dead—then prove that the child— But stop. I'm going too fast. *Hyde* couldn't have been interested in having it supposed that the child was dead. How could he have known about the Berwick property?"

"But might he not have tried to kidnap the yellow girl?"

"There you hit it, Peek! Dolt that I've been not to think of that! I remember now that *Hyde* once said to me, the yellow girl would bring sixteen hundred dollars in New Orleans. Well, supposing he took the yellow girl, what could he do with the white child?"

"Can you, of all men, Mr. Vance, not guess? He could sell the child as a slave. Or, if he wanted to make her bring a little better price, he could tinge her skin just enough to give it a slight golden hue."

Vance wet a towel in iced water, and pressed it on his forehead.

"But you pierce my heart, Peek, by the bare suggestion of such things," he said. "That poor child! Clara was her name—a bright, affectionate

little lady! Should Hyde have given false testimony in regard to her death, I shudder to think what may have become of her. She, born to affluence, may be at this moment a wretched menial, or worse, a trained Cyprian, polluted, body and soul. Why was I not more thorough in my investigations? But perhaps 'tis not too late to prove the villany, if villany there has been."

"Hyde may be able to put you on the right track," suggested Peek.

Vance sat down, and for five minutes seemed lost in meditation. Then, starting up, he said: "Where would you next go in pursuit of your wife and child?"

"To Texas," replied Peek.

"To Texas you shall go. Would you venture to face Colonel Hyde?"

"With these green goggles I would face any of my old masters; and the scalds upon my face would alone prevent my being known."

"I can get you a pass from the Mayor himself, so that you'd not be molested. Find Hyde, and bring him to me at any cost. Money will do it. When can you start?"

"By the next boat—in half an hour."

"All right. Make your home at Bernard's

when you return. The house is mine. Here's the direction. Here's a pass from the Mayor which I've filled up for you. And here's money which you needn't stop to count. Good by!"

And, with a grasp of the hand, they parted, and Peek quitted the hotel to take the boat for Galveston.

He had no sooner gone than Vance went downstairs to the dining-hall. Most of the guests had finished their dinners; but at a small table near that at which he took his seat were a company of four, lingering over the dessert.

Senator Wigman, a puffy, red-faced man, had been holding forth on the prospective glories of the Confederacy.

"Yes, sir," said he, refilling his glass with Burgundy, "with the rest of the world we'll trade, but never, never with the Yankees. Not one pound of cotton shall ever go from the South to their accursed cities; not one ounce of their steel or their manufactures shall ever cross our borders." And Wigman emptied his glass at a single gulp.

"Good for Wigman!" exclaimed Mr. Robson, a round, full-faced young man, rather fat, and wearing gold-rimmed spectacles. "But what about Yankee ice, Wigman? Will you deprive us of

that also? And tell me, my Wigman, why is it that, since you despise these Yankees so intensely, you allow your children to remain at school in Massachusetts? Isn't that a little inconsistent, my Wigman?"

Wigman was obliged to refill his glass before he could summon his thoughts for a reply.

"Mr. Robson," he then said, "you're a scholar, and must be aware that the ancient Spartans, in order to disgust their children with intemperance, used to make their slaves drunk. If I send my children among the Yankees, it is that they may be struck by the superiority of the Southern character when they return home."

"So you've no faith in the old maxim touching evil communications?" said Robson, taking a bottle of champagne, and easing the cork so as to send it to the ceiling with a loud pop. "Now, gentlemen, bumpers all round! Onslow, let me fill your glass; Kenrick, yours. Drink to my sentiment. Here's confusion to the old concern!"

Vance was just lifting a spoonful to his lips; but he returned it to his plate as he heard the name of Onslow, and looked round. Yes, it was surely he! —the boy of the Pontiac, now a handsome youth of twenty-four. On his right sat the young man

addressed as Kenrick. At the latter Vance hardly looked, so intent was he on Onslow's response.

Wigman spoke first. Holding up his glass, and amorously eyeing the salmon hue of the wine, he exclaimed: "Agreed! Here's confusion to the old con-hiccup-concern!"

The Senator's unfortunate hiccup elicited inextinguishable laughter from the rest, until Robson rapped with the handle of his knife on the table, and cried: "Order! order! Gentlemen, I consider that man a sneaking traitor who'll not get drunk in behalf of sentiments like those our friend the Senator has been uttering."

"Look here, young man, do you mean to insinuate that I'm getting drunk?" said Wigman, angrily.

"Far from it, Wigman. Anyone can see you're *not getting* drunk."

"I accept the apology," said Wigman, with maudlin dignity.

"Well, then, gentlemen," cried Robson, "now for the previous question. Confusion to the old concern!"

Wigman and Onslow drank to the sentiment, but Kenrick, calling a negro waiter, handed the glass to him, and said: "Throw that to the pigs, and bring me a fresh glass."

"Halloo! What the deuce do you mean by that?" cried Robson. "Have we a Bourbon among us? Have we a Yankee sympathiser among us? Is it possible? Does Mr. Charles Kenrick of Kenrick, son of Robert Kenrick, Esq., Confederate M. C., and heir to a thousand niggers, refuse to drink to the downfall of Abolitionism, and those other isms against which we've drawn the sword and flung away the scabbard?"

"Yes, by Jove!" interposed Wigman. "And we'll welcome our invaders—with—with—"

"With bloody hands to hospitable graves," said Robson. "Speak quick, my Wigman. That's the Southern formula, I believe, invented, like the new song of *Dixie*, by an impertinent Yankee. It's devilish hard we have to import from these b—d Yankees the very slang and music we turn against them."

"Answer me, Mr. Charles Kenrick," said Wigman, assuming a front of judicial severity—"did you mean any offence to the Confederacy by dishonouring the sentiment of hostility to its enemy?"

"D—n the Confederacy!" said Kenrick.

"Hear him," said Robson. "Was there ever such blasphemy? Please write it down, Onslow, that he d—s the Confederacy. And write

Wigman down an— No matter for that part of it! We shall hear Kenrick blaspheming slavery by and by."

"D—n slavery!" said Kenrick.

"Kenrick is joking," said Onslow.

"Kenrick was never more serious in his life, Mr. Onslow!"

"Look here, my dear fellow," said Robson: "there *are* sanctities which must not be invaded, even under the privilege of champagne. Insult the Virgin Mary, traduce the Holy Trinity, profane the Holy of holies, say that Jeff Davis isn't a remarkable man, as much as you please, but beware how you speak ill of the peculiar institution. We'll twist the noose for you with a pleased alacrity unless you retract those wicked words, and do penance in two tumblers of Heidsieck drunk in expiation of your horrible levity."

"D—n slavery!" reiterated Kenrick.

"He's a subject for the Committee of Safety," suggested Wigman.

"Kenrick is playing with us all this while," said Onslow. "Come! Confess it, old schoolfellow! You honour the new flag as much as I do."

"I'll show you how much I honour it," said Kenrick; and, going to a table where a small

Confederate flag was stuck in a leg of bacon, he tore off the silken emblem, ripped it in four parts, and, casting it on the floor, put his foot on the fragments and spat on them.

Wigman drew a small bowie-knife from a pocket inside of his vest, and, starting to his feet, kicked back his chair, and rushed with somewhat tortuous motion towards Kenrick; but, having miscalculated his powers of equilibrium, the Senator fell helplessly on the floor, and dropped his knife. Robson kicked it to a distant part of the room, and, helping Wigman to his feet, placed him in his chair, and counselled him not to try it again.

"It is to me that Mr. Kenrick must answer for this insult to the flag," said Onslow.

Kenrick bowed. Then, resuming his seat, he took a fresh glass, and, filling it till it overflowed with champagne, rose and exclaimed: "The Union! not as it *was*, but as it *shall* be, with universal freedom—from the St. Croix to the Rio Grande—from Cape Cod to the Golden Gate!" Kenrick touched his lips reverently to the wine, then put it down, and, taking from his bosom a beautiful American flag made of silk, shook it out, and said, "Here, gentlemen, is *my* religion."

Onslow made a snatch at it, but Kenrick warded

off his grip, and, folding and returning the flag to the inner pocket of his vest, calmly took his seat as if nothing had happened.

All this while Vance had been gazing on Kenrick intently, as if wrestling in thought with some inexplicable mystery. "Strange!" he murmured. "The very counterpart of my own person as I was at twenty-three! My very features! My very figure! The very colour of my hair! And then—what my mother often told me was a Cartaret peculiarity—when he smiles, that fan-like radiation of fine wrinkles under the temples from the outer corner of the eye! What does it all mean? I know of no relation of the name of Kenrick."

"I shall not sit at table with a traitor," cried Onslow.

"Then keep standing all the time," said Kenrick.

"Nonsense! I thought we were all philosophers in this company," interposed Robson, who, having had large commercial dealings with the elder Kenrick, was in no mood to see the son harmed. "Sit down, Onslow! Wigman, keep your seat. Now, waiter, green glasses all round, and a bottle of that sparkling Moselle. They'll know at the bar what I mean."

Onslow resumed his seat. Wigman stiffened himself up and drew nearer to the table, fired at the prospect of a fresh bottle.

At this juncture Mr. George Sanderson, a Northern man with Southern principles, in person short, vulgar, and flashily dressed, the very *beau ideal* of a bar-room rowdy, having heard the clink of glasses, and sighted from the corridor an array of bottles, was seized with one of his half-hourly attacks of thirstiness, and entered to join the party, although Wigman was the only one he knew. The latter introduced him to the rest. Robson uncorked the Moselle, and asked, "Now Sumter has fallen, what's next on the programme?"

"Washington must be taken," said Sanderson.

"We must winter in Philadelphia," said Wigman.

"In what capacity? As conquerors or as captives?" said Kenrick.

"Is the gentleman at all shaky?" asked Sanderson.

"He has been shamming Abolitionism," replied Onslow.

"He d—s slavery," cried the indignant Wigman.

"He's sure to go to hell for that," said Robson ;

"intercession can't save him. He has committed the unpardonable sin. The Rev. Dr. Palmer has recently made researches in theology which satisfy himself and me and the rest of the saints, that the sin against the Holy Ghost is in truth nothing less than to be an Abolitionist."

"What is your private opinion of the Yankees, Mr. Sanderson?" asked Kenrick. "Do you think they'll fight?"

"No, sir-r-r. Fifty thousand Confederates could walk through the Northern States, and plant their colours on every State capital north of Mason and Dixon's line. They could whip any army the Yankees could bring against them."

"Then you think the Yankees are cowards, eh?"

"Compared with the Southerners—yes!" said Sanderson, holding up his glass for the waiter to refill.

"His opinion is that of an expert. He's himself a Yankee!" cried Robson.

"I see Mr. Sanderson soars far above the spirit of the old proverb touching the bird that fouls its nest," said Kenrick.

"Order!" cried Robson. Mr. Sanderson is a philosopher. He disdains vulgar prejudices. To

him the old nest is straw and mud, and the old flag is a bit of bunting. Isn't it so, Sanderson?"

"Exactly so," said Sanderson, a little puzzled by Robson's persiflage, and seeking relief from it in another glass of wine. But, finding the Moselle bottle empty, he applied himself to a decanter labelled Old Monongahela.

A sudden snore from Wigman, who had fallen asleep in his chair, startled the party once more into laughter.

"Happy Wigman!" said Robson. "He smiles. He is dreaming of slavery extension into benighted slaveless Mexico—of Cuba annexed, and her stupidly mild slave-code reformed—of tawny-hued houries, metifs, and quarteroons fanning him while he reposes—of unnumbered Yankees howling over their lost trade, and kneeling vainly for help to him—to Wigman! Profound Wigman! Behold the great man asleep! Happy Texas in having such a representative! Happy Jeff Davis in having such a counsellor! Gentlemen, my feelings grow too effusive. I must leave you. The dinner has been good. The wine has been good. I must make one criticism, however. The young gentlemen are degenerate. They do not drink. Look at them. They are perfectly sober.

What is the world coming to? At our hotels, where twenty years ago we used to see fifty—yes, a hundred—champagne bottles on the dinner-table, we now don't see ten. And yet men talk of the progress of the age! 'Tis all a delusion. The day of juleps has gone by. We are receding in civilization. Wigman is a type of the good old times—a landmark, a pattern for the rising generation. To his immortal honour be it recorded, that after that most heroic achievement of this or any other age, the subjugation of Anderson's little starving garrison in Sumter by Beauregard, Wigman started in a small boat for the fort. Wigman landed. Wigman was the first to land. He entered one of the bomb-proofs. The first thought of a vulgar mind would have been to fly the victorious flag. Not so Wigman. On a shelf he saw a bottle. With a sublime self-abandonment he saw nothing else. He seized it; he uncorked it; he drank from it. And it was not till he had exhausted the last drop, that he learnt from the surgeon it was poison. O posterity! don't be ungrateful and forget this picture when you think of Sumter. Our Wigman was saved to us by an emetic. Hand him down, ye future Hildreths and Motleys of America. Un-

conscious Wigman! He responds with another rhoncus. Mr. Sanderson, I leave him to your generous care. Gentlemen, good by!" And without waiting for a reply, Robson received his hat from the attentive waiter, waved a bow to the party, and waddled out of the hall.

Mr. Sanderson, seeing that a bottle of Chateau Margaux was but half emptied, sighed that he had not detected it sooner. Filling a goblet with the purple fluid, he drained it in long and appreciative draughts, rolling the smooth juice over his tongue, and carefully savouring the bouquet. Having emptied this bottle, he sighted another nearly two-thirds full of champagne. Sanderson felt a pang at the thought that there was a limit to man's ability to quaff good liquor. He, however, went up to the attack bravely, and succeeded in disposing of two full tumblers. Then a spirit of meek content at his bibulous achievements seemed to come over him. He put his thumbs in the arm-holes of his vest, leaned back, and benignantlly said, "This warm weather has made me a trifle thirsty."

Wigman suddenly started from his sleep, wakened by the cessation of noise. Sanderson rose, and assisted the Senator to his feet. "Come,

my dear fellow," said he, "it's time to adjourn. Good by, young gentlemen!" And arm in arm the two worthies staggered out of the hall, each under the impression that the other was the worse for liquor, and each affectionately counselling the other not to expose himself.

Vance still sat at his table, and from behind a newspaper glanced occasionally at the two young men who had so excited his interest.

"Now, Kenrick," said Onslow, "now that Robson the impenetrable, and Wigman the windy, and Sanderson the beastly, are out of the way, tell me what you mean by your incomprehensible conduct. When we met at table to-day, the first time for five years, I did not dream that you were other than you used to be, the enthusiastic champion of the South and its institutions."

"You wonder," replied Kenrick, "that I should express my detestation of the Rebellion and its cause—of the Confederacy and its corner-stone—that I should differ from my father, who believes in slavery. How much more reasonably might I wonder at *your* apostasy from truths which such a man as your father holds!"

"My father is an honourable man—an excellent man," said Onslow; "but—"

"But," interrupted Kenrick, "if you were sincere just now in the epithet you flung at me, you consider him also a traitor. Now a traitor is one who betrays a trust. What trust has your father betrayed?"

"He does not stand by his native State in her secession from the old Union," answered Onslow.

"But what if he holds that his duty to the central government is paramount to his duty to his State?" asked Kenrick.

"That I regard as an error," replied Onslow.

"Then by your own showing," said Kenrick, "all that you can fairly say is, that your father has erred in judgment—not that he has been guilty of a base act of treason."

"No, I didn't mean that, Charles—your pardon," said Onslow, holding out his hand.

Kenrick cordially accepted the proffered apology, and then asked: "May I speak frankly to you, Robert—speak as I used to in the old times at William and Mary's?"

"Certainly. Proceed."

"Your father literally obeyed the Saviour's injunction. He gave up all he had, to follow where truth led. Convinced that slavery was a wrong, he ruined his fortunes in the attempt to

substitute free labour for that of slaves. Through the hostility of the slave interest the experiment failed."

"I think," said Onslow, "my father acted unwisely in sacrificing his fortunes to an abstraction."

"An abstraction! The man who tries to undo a wrong is an abstractionist, is he? What a world this would be if all men would be guilty of similar abstractions! To such a one I would say, 'Master, lead on, and I will follow thee, to the last gasp, with truth and loyalty!' Strange! unaccountably strange, that his own son should have deserted him for the filthy flesh-pots of slavery!"

"May not good men differ as to slavery?" asked Onslow.

"Put that question," replied Kenrick, "to nine-tenths of the slaveholders—men in favour of lynching, torturing, murdering, those opposed to the institution. Put it to Mr. Carson, who, the other day, in his own house, shot down an unarmed and unsuspecting visitor, because he had freely expressed views opposed to slavery. Abolitionists don't hang men for not believing with them—do they? But the whole code and temper of the South reply to you, that men may *not* differ, and *shall* not differ, on the subject of slavery. Onslow, give me but

one thing—and that a thing guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States, though never tolerated in the Slave States—give me *liberty of the press* in those States, and I, as a friend of the Union, would say to the government at Washington, ‘Put by the sword. Wait! I will put down this rebellion. I have the pen and the press! Therefore is slavery doomed, and its days are numbered.’”

“Why is it,” asked Onslow, “if slavery is wrong, that you find all the intelligence, all the culture, at the South, and even in the Border States, on its side?”

“Ah! there,” replied Kenrick, “there’s the sunken rock on which you and many other young men have made wreck of your very souls! Your æsthetic has superseded your moral natures. To work is in such shocking bad taste, when one can make others work for one!”

“Nine-tenths of the men at the South of any social position,” said Onslow, “are in favour of secession.”

“I know it,” returned Kenrick, “and the sadder for human nature that it should be so! In Missouri, in Kentucky, in Virginia, in Baltimore, all the young men who would be considered

fashionable, all who thoughtlessly or heartlessly prize more their social *status* than they do justice and right, follow the lead of the pro-slavery aristocracy. I know from experience how hard it is to break loose from those social and family ties. But I thank God I've succeeded. 'Twas like emerging from mephitic vapours into the sweet oxygen of a clear, sun-bright atmosphere, that hour I resolved to take my lot with freedom and the right against slavery and the wrong!"

"How was your conversion effected?" asked Onslow. "Did you fall in love with some Yankee schoolmistress? I wasn't aware you'd been living at the North."

"I've never set foot in a Free State," replied Kenrick. "My life has been passed here in Louisiana on my father's plantation. I was bred a slaveholder, and lived one after the most straitest sect of our religion until about six months ago. See at the trunkmaker's my learned papers in De Bow's Review. They're entitled 'Slave Labour *versus* Free.' Unfortunately for my admirers and disciples, there was in my father's library a little stray volume of Channing's writings on slavery. I read it at first contemptuously, then attentively, then respectfully, and at last lovingly and prayer-

fully. The truth, almost insufferably radiant, poured in upon me. Convictions were heaved up in my mind like volcanic islands out of the sea. I was spiritually magnetised and possessed."

"What said your father?"

"My father and I had always lived more as companions than as sire and son. There is only a difference of twenty-two years in our ages. My own mother, a very beautiful woman who died when I was five years old, was six years older than my father. From her I derived my intellectual peculiarities. Of course my father has cast me off—disowned, disinherited me. He is sincere in his pro-slavery fanaticism. I wish I could say as much of all who fall in with the popular current."

"But what do you mean to do, Charles? 'Tis unsafe for you to stay here in New Orleans, holding such sentiments."

"My plans are not yet matured," replied Kenrick. "I shall stand by the old flag, you may be sure of that. And I shall liberate all the slaves I can, beginning with my father's."

"You would not fight against your own State?"

"Incontinently I would if my own State should persist in rebellion against the Union; and so I

would fight against my own county should that rebel against the State."

"Well, schoolfellow," said Onslow, with a fascinating frankness, "let us reserve our quarrels for the time when we shall cross swords in earnest. That time may come sooner than we dream of. The less can we afford to say bitter things to each other now. Come, and let me introduce you to a charming young lady. How long do you stay here?"

"Perhaps a week ; perhaps a month."

"I shall watch over you while you remain, for I do not fancy seeing my old crony hung."

"Better so than be false to the light within me. Though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

Onslow made no reply, but affectionately, almost compassionately, took Kenrick by the arm and led him away.

Vance put down his newspaper, and then, immersed in meditation, slowly passed out of the dining-hall, and upstairs into his own room.

CHAPTER VI.

A MONSTER OF INGRATITUDE.

Faint hearts are usually false hearts, choosing sin rather than suffering.—*Argyle, before his execution.*

MRS. GENTRY had attired herself in her new spring costume, a feuillemorte silk, with a bonnet trimmed to match, of the frightful coal-hod shape, with sable roses and a bristling ruche. It was just such a bonnet as Proserpine, Queen of the Shades, might have chosen for a stroll with Pluto along the shore of Lake Avernus.

After many satisfactory glances in the mirror, Mrs. Gentry sat down and trotted her right foot impatiently. Tarquin, entering, announced the carriage.

“Well, go to Miss Ellen, and ask when she’ll be ready.”

Five minutes Mrs. Gentry waited, while the horses, pestered by stinging insects, dashed their

hoofs against the pavements. At last Tarquin returned with the report, that Miss Ellen's room was empty.

"Has Pauline looked for her?"

"Yes, missis."

"Ask Esha if she has seen her."

Pauline, standing at the head of the stairs, put the question, and Esha replied testily from the kitchen: "Don't no nuffin 'bout her. Hab suffin better ter do dan look af'r all de school-gals in dis house."

Pauline turned from the old heathen in despair, and suggested that perhaps Miss Ellen had stepped out to buy a ribbon or some hairpins.

Mrs. Gentry waxed angry. "O, but she'll be come up with!" This was the teacher's favourite form of consolation. The *Abolitionists* would be come up with. Abe Lincoln would be come up with. General Scott would be come up with. Everybody who offended Mrs. Gentry would be come up with—if not in this world, why then in some other.

An hour passed. She began to get seriously alarmed. She sent away the carriage. Hardly had it gone, when a second vehicle drew up before the door, and out of it stepped Mr. Ratcliff. She

met him in the parlour, and, fearing to tell the truth, merely remarked, that Ellen was out making a few purchases.

“When will she be back?”

“Perhaps not till dinner-time.”

“Then I’ll call to-morrow at this hour.”

Mrs. Gentry passed the day in a state of wretched anxiety. She sent out messengers. She interested a policeman in the search. But no trace of the fugitive! Mrs. Gentry was in despair. If Ellen had not been a slave, her disappearance would have been comparatively a small matter. If it had been somebody’s free-born daughter who had absconded, it wouldn’t have been half so bad. But here was a slave! One whose flight would lay open to suspicion the teacher’s allegiance to *the* institution! Intolerable! Of course it was no concern of hers to what fate that slave was about to be consigned.

Ah! sister of the South (and I have known many the charms of whose persons and manners I thought incomparable)—a woman whose own virtue is not rooted in sand, cannot, if she thinks and reasons, fail to shudder at a system which sends other women, perhaps as innocent and pure as she herself, to be sold to brutal men at auctions. And

yet, if anyone had told Mrs. Gentry she was no better than a procuress, both she and the Rev. Dr. Palmer would have thought it an impious aspersion.

At the appointed hour Ratcliff appeared. Mrs. Gentry's toilet that day was appropriate to the calamitous occasion. She was dressed in a black silk robe intensely flounced, and decorated around the bust with a profluvium of black lace that might have melted the heart of a border ruffian. She entered the parlour, tragically shaking out a pocket handkerchief with an edging of black.

"O, Mr. Ratcliff! Mr. Ratcliff!" she exclaimed, rushing forward, then checking herself melodramatically, and seizing the back of a chair, as if for support.

"Well, madam, what's the matter?"

"That heartless—that ungrateful girl!"

"What of her?"

Mrs. Gentry answered by applying her handkerchief to her eyes very much as Mrs. Siddons used to do in *Belvidera*.

"Come, madam," interrupted Ratcliff, "my time is precious. No d—d nonsense, if you please. To the point. What has happened?"

Rudely shocked into directness by these words,

Mrs. Gentry replied: "She has disappeared—
r-r-run away!"

"D—nation!" was Ratcliff's concise and emphatic comment. He started up and paced the room. "This is a d—d pretty return for my confidence, madam."

"O, she'll be come up with—she'll be come up with!" sobbed Mrs. Gentry.

"Come up with—where?"

"In the next world, if not in this."

"Pooh! When did she disappear?"

"Yesterday, while I was waiting for her to go out to buy her new dresses. O the ingratitude!"

"Have you made no search for her?"

"Yes, I've made every possible inquiry. I've paid ten dollars to a police-officer to look her up. O the ingratitude of the world! But she'll be come up with!"

"Did you let her know that I was her master?"

"Yes; 'twas only yesterday I imparted the information."

"How did she receive it?"

"She was a little startled at first, but soon seemed reconciled, even pleased with the idea of her new wardrobe."

"Have you closely questioned your domestics?"

"Yes. They know nothing. She must have slipped unobserved out of the house."

"Is there anyone among them with whom she was more familiar than with another?"

"She used to read the Bible to old Esha, by my direction."

"Call up old Esha. I would like to question her."

Esha soon appeared, her bronzed face glistening with perspiration from the kitchen fire—the never-failing bright-coloured Madras handkerchief on her head.

"Esha," said Mr. Ratcliff, "have you ever seen me before?"

"Yes, Massa Ratcliff, of'n. Lib'd on the nex' plantation to yourn. I 'longed to Massa Peters wunst. But he'm dead and gone."

"Do you know what an oath is, Esha?"

"Yes, massa; it's when one swar he know dis or dunno dat."

"Very well. Do you know what becomes of her who swears falsely?"

"O yes, massa; she go to de lake of brimstone and fire, whar' she hab bad time for eber and eber, Amen."

"Are you a Christian, Esha?"

"I'ze notin' else, Massa Ratchiff."

"Well, Esha, here's the Holy Bible. Take it in your left hand, kiss the book, and then hold up your right hand."

Esha went through the required form.

"You do solemnly swear, as you hope to be saved from the torments of hell through all eternity, that you will truly answer, to the best of your knowledge and belief, the questions I may put to you. And if you lie, may the Lord strike you dead. Now kiss the book again, to show you take the oath."

Esha kissed the book, and returned it to the table.

"Now, then, do you know anything of the disappearance of this girl, Ellen Murray?"

"Nuffin, massa, nuffin at all."

"Did she ever tell you she meant to leave this house?"

"Nebber, massa! She nebber tell me any sich ting."

"Did she have any talk with you yesterday?"

"Not a bressed word did dat chile say to me 'cep ter scole me 'cause I didn't do up her Organdy muslin nice as she 'spected. De little hateful she-debble! How can dis ole nig do eb'ry ting all at

wunst, and do't well, should like ter know? It's cook an' wash an' iron, an' iron an' wash an'—"

"There! That will do, Esha. You can go."

"Yes, Massa Ratcliff."

Stealing into the next room, Esha listened at the folding-doors.

"She knows nothing—that's very clear," said Ratcliff. He went to the window, and looked out in silence a full minute; then, coming back, added: "Stop snivelling, madam. I'm not a fool. I've seen women before now. This girl must be found—found if it cost me ten thousand dollars. And you must aid in the search. If I find her—well and good. If I don't find her, you shall suffer for it. This is what I mean to do: I shall have copies of her photograph put in the hands of the best detectives in the city. I shall pay them well in advance, and promise five hundred dollars to the one that finds her. They'll come to you. You must give them all the information you can, and lend them your servants to identify the girl. This old Esha plainly has a grudge against her, and may be made useful in hunting her up. Let her go out daily for that purpose. Tell all your pupils to be on the watch. I'll break up your school if she isn't found. Do you understand?"

“I’ll do all I can, sir, to have her caught.”

“That will be your most prudent course, madam.”

And Ratcliff, with more exasperation in his face than his words had expressed, quitted the house.

“The brute !” muttered Mrs. Gentry, as through the blinds she saw him enter his barouche, and drive off. “He treated me as if I’d been a drab. But he’ll be come up with—he will !”

Esha crept down into the kitchen, with thoughts intent on what she had heard.

CHAPTER VII.

THE YOUNG LADY WITH A CARPET-BAG.

Pain has its own noble joy when it kindles a consciousness of life, before stagnant and torpid.—*John Sterling.*

CHILDREN are quick to detect flaws in the genealogy of their associates. School-girls are quite as exclusive in their notions as our grown-up leaders of society. Woe to the candidate for companionship on whose domestic record there hangs a doubt!

Mrs. Gentry having felt it her duty to inform her pupils that Clara was not a lady, the latter was thenceforth “left out in the cold” by the little Brahmins of the seminary. She would sit, like a criminal, apart from the rest, or in play-hours seek the company, either of Esha or the mocking-bird.

One circumstance puzzled the other young ladies. They could not understand why, in the more showy accomplishments of music, singing, and dancing, more expense should be bestowed on

Clara's education than on theirs. The elegance and variety of her toilet excited at once their envy and their curiosity.

Clara, finding that she was held back from serious studies, gave her thoughts to them all the more resolutely, and excelled in them so far as to shock the conservative notions of Mrs. Gentry, who thought such acquisitions presumptuous in a slave. The pupils all tossed their little heads, and turned their backs, when Clara drew near. All but one. Laura Tremaine prized Clara's counsels on questions of dress, and defied the jeers and frowns that would deter her from cultivating the acquaintance of one suspected of ignoble birth. Something almost like a friendship grew up between the two. Laura was the only daughter of a wealthy cotton-broker who resided the greater part of the year in New Orleans, at the St. Charles Hotel.

The two girls used to stroll through the garden with arms about each other's waist. One day Clara, in a gush of candour, not only avowed herself an Abolitionist, but tried to convert Laura to the heresy. *Quelle horreur!* There was at once a cessation of the intimacy—Laura exacting a recantation which the little infidel proudly refused.

The disagreement had occurred only a few days before that flight of Clara's in which we must now follow her. After parting from Esha, she walked for some distance, ignorant why she selected one direction rather than another, and having no clearly defined purpose as to her destination. She had promenaded thus about an hour, when she saw a barouche approaching. The occupant, a man, sat leaning lazily back with his feet up on the opposite cushions. A black driver and footman, both in livery, filled the lofty front seat. As the vehicle rolled on, Clara recognised Ratcliff. She shuddered and dropped her veil.

Fortunately he was half asleep, and did not see her.

Whither now? Of two streets she chose the more obscure. On she walked, and the carpet-bag began to be an encumbrance. The heat was oppressive. Occasionally a passer-by among the young men would say to an acquaintance, "Did you notice that figure?" One man offered to carry the bag. She declined his aid. On and on she walked. Whither and why? She could not explain. All at once it occurred to her she was wasting her strength in an objectless promenade.

Her utterly forlorn condition revealed itself in

all its desolateness and danger. She stopped under the shade of a magnolia-tree, and, leaning against the trunk, put back her veil, and wiped the moisture from her face. She had been walking more than two hours, and was overheated and fatigued. What should she do? The tears began to flow at the thought that the question was one for which she had no reply.

Suddenly she looked round with the vague sense that some one was watching her. She encountered the gaze of a gentleman who, with an air of mingled curiosity and compassion, stood observing her grief. He wore a loose frock of buff nankin, with white vest and pantaloons; and on his head was a hat of very fine Panama straw. Whether he was young or old Clara did not remark. She only knew that a face beautiful from its compassion beamed on her, and that it was the face of a gentleman.

"Can I assist you?" he asked.

"No, thank you," replied Clara. "I'm fatigued—that's all—and am resting here a few minutes."

"Here's a little house that belongs to me," said the gentleman, pointing to a neat though small wooden tenement before which they were standing. "I do not live here, but the family who do will be

pleased to receive you for my sake. You shall have a room all to yourself, and rest there till you are refreshed. Do you distrust me, my child?"

There are faces out of which Truth looks so unequivocally, that to distrust them seems like a profanation. Clara did not distrust, and yet she hesitated, and replied through her tears, "No, I do not distrust you, but I've no claim on your kindness."

"Ah! but you *have* a claim," said Vance (for it was he); "you are unhappy, and the unhappy are my brothers and my sisters. I've been unhappy myself. I knew one years ago, young like you, and like you unhappy, and through her also you have a claim. There! Let me relieve you of that bag. Now take my arm. Good! This way." Clara's tears gushed forth anew at these words, and yet less at the words than at the tone in which they were uttered. So musical and yet so melancholy was that tone.

He knocked at the door. It was opened by Madame Bernard, a spruce little Frenchwoman, who had married a journeyman printer, and who felt unbounded gratitude to Vance for his gift of the rent of the little house.

"Is it you, Mr. Vance? We've been wondering why you didn't come."

"Madame Bernard, this young lady is fatigued. I wish her to rest in my room."

"The room of Monsieur is always in order. Follow me, my dear."

And, taking the carpet-bag, Madame conducted her to the little chamber, then asked: "Now what will you have, my dear? A little claret and water? Some fruit or cake?"

"Nothing, thank you. I'll rest on the sofa awhile. You're very kind. The gentleman's name is Vance, is it?"

"Yes; is he not an acquaintance?"

"I never saw him till three minutes ago. He noticed me resting, and, I fear, weeping in the street, and he asked me in here to rest."

"'Twas just like him. He's so good, so generous! He gives me the rent of this house with the pretty garden attached. You can see it from the window. Look at the grapes. He reserves for himself this room, which I daily dust and keep in order. Poor man! 'Twas here he passed the few months of his marriage, years ago. His wife died, and he bought the house, and has kept it in repair ever since. This used to be their

sleeping-room. 'Twas also their parlour, for they were poor. There's their little case of books. Here's the piano on which they used to play duets. 'Twas a hired piano, and was returned to the owner; but Mr. Vance found it in an old warehouse, not long ago, had it put in order, and brought here. 'Tis one of Chickering's best; a superb instrument. You should hear Mr. Vance play on it."

"Does he play well?" asked Clara, who had almost forgotten her own troubles in listening to the little woman's gossip.

"Ah! you never heard such playing! I know something of music. My family is musical. I flatter myself I'm a judge. I've heard Thalberg, Vieuxtemps, Jael, Gottschalk; and Mr. Vance plays better than any of them."

"Is he a professor?"

"No, merely an amateur. But he puts a soul into the notes. Do you play at all, my dear?"

"Yes, I began to learn so early that I cannot recollect the time when."

"I thought you must be musical. Just try this instrument, my dear, that is, if you're not too tired."

"Certainly, if 'twill oblige you."

Seating herself at the piano, Clara played, from Donizetti's *Lucia*, Edgardo's melodious wail of abandonment and despair, "*L' universo intero e un deserto per me senza Lucia.*"

Mrs. Bernard had opened the door that Vance might hear. At the conclusion he knocked and entered. "Is this the way you rest yourself, young pilgrim?" he asked. "You're a proficient, I see. You've been made to practise four hours a day."

"Yes, ever since I can remember."

"So I should think. Now let me hear something in a different vein."

Clara, while the blood mounted to her forehead, and her whole frame dilated, struck into the "Star-spangled Banner," playing it with her whole soul, and at the close singing the refrain,

And the Star-spangled Banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

"But that's treason!" cried Mrs. Bernard.

"Yes, Mrs. Bernard," said Vance, "run at once to the police-station. Tell them to send a file of soldiers. We must have her arrested."

"Oh, no, no!" exclaimed Clara, deceived by Vance's grave acting. Then, seeing her mistake,

she laughed, and said: "That's too bad. I thought for a moment you were in earnest."

"We will spare you this time," said Vance, with a smile that made his whole face luminous; "but should outsiders in the street hear you, they may not be so forbearing. They will tear our little house down if you're not careful."

"I'll not be so imprudent again," returned Clara. "Will you play for me, sir?" And she resumed her seat on the sofa.

Vance played some extemporised variations on the Carnival of Venice; and Clara, who had regarded Mrs. Bernard's praises as extravagant, now concluded they were the literal truth. "Oh!" she exclaimed, naïvely, "I never heard playing like that. Do not ask me to play before you again, sir."

Mrs. Bernard left to attend to the affairs of the *cuisine*.

"Now, mademoiselle," said Vance, "what can I do before I go?"

"All I want," replied Clara, "is time to arrange some plan. I left home so suddenly I'm quite at a loss."

"Do I understand you've left your parents?"

"I have no parents, sir."

"Then a near relation, or a guardian?"

"Neither, sir. I am independent of all ties."

"Have you no friend to whom you can go for advice?"

"I had a friend, but she gave me up because I'm an Abolitionist."

"My poor little lady! An Abolitionist? You? In times like these? When Sumter has fallen, too? No wonder your friend has cast you off. Who is she?"

"Miss Laura Tremaine. She lives at the St. Charles. Do you know her, sir?"

"Slightly. I met her in the drawing-room not long since. She does not appear unamiable. But why are you an Abolitionist?"

"Because I believe in God."

Vance felt that this was the summing-up of the whole matter. He looked with new interest on the "little lady." In height she was somewhat shorter than Estelle—not much over five feet two and a half. Not from her features, but from the maturity of their expression, he judged she might have reached her eighteenth year. Somewhat more of a brunette than Estelle, and with fine abundant hair of a light brown. Eyes—he could not quite see their colour; but they were vivid, penetrating,

earnest. Features regular, and a profile even more striking in its beauty than her front face. A figure straight and slim, but exquisitely rounded, and every movement revealing some new grace. Where had he seen a face like it?

After a few moments of contemplation, he said: "Do not think me impertinently curious. You have been well educated. You have not had to labour for a living. Are the persons to whom you've been indebted for support no longer your friends?"

"They are my worst enemies, and all that has been bestowed on me has been from hateful motives and calculations."—"Now I'm going to ask a very delicate question. Are you provided with money?"—"Oh, yes, sir, amply."—"How much have you?"—"Twenty dollars."—"Indeed! Are you so rich as that? What's your name?"—"The name I've been brought up under is Ellen Murray; but I hate it."—"Why so?"—"Because of a dream."—"A dream! And what was it?"—"Shall I relate it?"—"By all means."

"I dreamed that a beautiful lady led me by the hand into a spacious garden. On one side were fruits, and on the other side flowers, and in the

middle a circle of brilliant verbenas from the centre of which rose a tall fountain, fed from a high hill in the neighbourhood. And the lady said, 'This is your garden, and your name is not Ellen Murray.' Then she gave me a letter sealed with blue — no, grey — wax, and said, 'Put this letter on your eyes, and you shall find it there when you wake. Some one will open it, and your name will be seen written there, though you may not understand it at first.' 'But am I not awake?' I asked. 'Oh no,' said the lady. 'This is all a dream. But we can sometimes impress those we love in this way.' 'And who are you?' I asked. 'That you will know when you interpret the letter,' she said."

"And what resulted from the dream?" — "The moment I waked I put my hand on my eyes. Of course I found no letter. The next night the lady came again, and said, 'The seal cannot be broken by yourself. Your name is not Ellen Murray — remember that.' A third night this dream beset me, and so forcibly that I resolved to get rid of the name as far as I could. And so I made my friends call me Darling."

"Well, Darling, as you —" — "Oh, but, sir! *you* must not call me Darling. That would never do!" "What *can* I call you, then?" — "Call me

Miss, or Mademoiselle." — "Well, Miss." — "No, I do not like the sibilation." — "Will *Ma'am* do any better?" — "Not till I'm more venerable. Call me Perdita." — "Perdita what?" — "Perdita Brown — yes, I love the name of Brown."

"Well, Perdita, as you've not quite made up your mind to seek the protection of Miss Tremaine, my advice is that you remain here till to-morrow. Here is a little case filled with books; and on the shelf of the closet is plenty of old music — works of Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schubert, and some of the Italian masters. Do you play Schubert's Sacred Song?" — "I never heard it." — "Learn it, then, by all means. 'Tis in that book. Shall I tell Mrs. Bernard you'll pass the night here?" — "Do, sir. I'm very grateful for your kindness." — "Good bye, Perdita! Should anything detain me to-morrow, wait till I come. Keep up your four hours' practice. Madame Bernard is amiable, but a little talkative. I shall tell her to allow you five hours for your studies. Adieu, Perdita!"

He held out his hand, and Clara gave hers, and cast down her eyes. "You've told me a true story?" said he. "Yes! I will trust you."

"Indeed, sir, I've told you nothing but the truth."

Yes. She had told the truth, but unhappily not the *whole* truth. And yet how she longed to kneel at his feet and confess all! Various motives withheld her. She was not quite sure how he had received her antislavery confessions. He might be a friend of Mr. Ratcliff. There was dismay in the very possibility. And finally a certain pride or prudence restrained her from throwing herself on the protection of a stranger not of her own sex.

And so the golden opportunity was allowed to escape!

Vance lingered for a moment holding her hand, as if to invite her to a further confidence; but she said nothing, and he left the room. Clara opened the music-book at Schubert's piece, and commenced playing. Vance stopped on the stairs and listened, keeping time approvingly. "Good!" he said. Then telling the little landlady not to interrupt Miss Brown's studies, he quitted the house, walking in the direction of the hotel.

Clara practised till she could play from memory the charming composition commended by Vance. Then she threw herself on the bed and fell asleep.

She had not remained thus an hour when there was a knock. Dinner! Mr. Bernard had come in; a dapper little man, so remarkably well satisfied with himself, his wife, and his bill of fare, that he repeatedly had to lay down knife and fork and rub his hands in glee.

"Are you related to Mr. Vance?" he asked Clara.

"Not at all. He saw me in the street, weary and distressed. The truth is, I had left my home for a good reason. I have no parents, you must consider. He asked me in here. From his looks I judged he was a man to trust. I gladly accepted his invitation."

"Truly he's a friend in need, Mademoiselle. I saw him do another kind thing to-day."

"What was it?"

"It happened only an hour ago in Carondelet Street. A ragged fellow was haranguing a crowd. He spoke on the wrong side—in short, in favour of the old flag. Some laughed, some hissed, some applauded. Suddenly a party of men, armed with swords and muskets, pushed through the crowd, and seized the speaker. They formed a court, Judge Lynch presiding, under a palmetto. They decided that the vagabond should be hung.

He had already been badly pricked with a bayonet. And now a table was brought out, he was placed on it, and a rope put round his neck and tied to a bough. Decidedly they were going to string him up."

"Good heavens!" cried Clara, who, as the story proceeded, had turned pale and thrust away the plate of food from before her. "Did you make no effort to save him?"

"What could I do? They would merely have got another rope, and made me keep him company. Well, the mob were expecting an entertainment. They were about to knock away the table, when Monsieur Vance pushed through the crowd, hauled off the hangman, and jumping on the table, cut the rope, and lifted the prisoner faint and bleeding to the ground. What a yell from Judge Lynch and the court! Monsieur Vance, his coat and vest all bloody from contact with"—

"What a shame!" interposed Mrs. Bernard. "A coat and vest he must have put on clean this morning! So nicely ironed and starched!"

"But my story agitates you, Mademoiselle," said the type-setter. "You look pale." And the little man, not regarding the inappropriateness of the act, rubbed his hands.

"Go on," replied Clara; and she sipped from a tumbler of cold water.

"There's little more to say, Mademoiselle. Messieurs, the bullies, drew their swords on Monsieur Vance. He showed a revolver, and they fell back. Then he talked to them till they cooled down, gave him three cheers, and went off. I and old Mr. Winslow helped him to find a carriage. We put the wounded man into it. He was driven to the hospital, and his wound attended to. 'Tis serious, I believe."

And Bernard again rubbed his hands.

"And was that the last you saw of Mr. Vance?" asked Clara?

"The last. Shall I help you to some pineapple, Mademoiselle?"

"No, thank you. I've finished my dinner. You will excuse me."

And she returned to the little room assigned to her use.

CHAPTER VIII.

WILL YOU WALK INTO MY PARLOUR?

Sing again the song you sung
 When we were together young;
 When there were but you and I
 Underneath the summer sky.
 Sing the song, and o'er and o'er,
 Though I know that nevermore
 Will it seem the song you sung
 When we were together young.

George William Curtis.

VANCE passed on through the streets, wondering what could be the mystery which had driven his new acquaintance forth into the wide world without a protector. Should he speak of her to Miss Tremaine? Perhaps. But not unless he could do it without betrayal of confidence.

There was something in Perdita that reminded him of Estelle. Had a pressure of similar circumstances wrought the peculiarity which awakened the association? Yet he missed in Perdita

that diaphanous simplicity, that uncalculating candour, which seemed to lead Estelle to unveil her whole nature before him. But Perdita had not wholly failed in frankness. Had she not glorified the old flag in her music? And had she not been outspoken on the one forbidden theme?

As these thoughts flitted through his mind, excluding for the moment those graver interests, involving a people's doom, he heard the shouts of a crowd, and saw a man, pale and bloody, standing on a table under a tree, from a branch of which a rope was dangling. Vance comprehended the meaning of it all in an instant. He darted toward the spot, gliding swift, agile, and flexuous through the compacted crowd. Yes! The victim was the same man to whom he had given the gold-piece some days before. Vance put a summary stop to Judge Lynch's proceedings, breaking up the court precisely as Bernard had related. The wounded man was conveyed to the hospital. Here Vance saw his wound dressed, hired an extra attendant to nurse him, and then, in tones of warmest sympathy, asked the sufferer what more he could do for him.

The man opened his eyes. A swarthy, filthy, un-

combed, unshaven wretch. He had been so blinded by blood that he had not recognised Vance. But now, seeing him, he started, and strove to raise himself on his elbow.

Vance and the surgeon prevented the movement. The patient stared, and said: "You've done it agin, have yer? What's yer name?"

"This is Mr. Vance," replied the surgeon.

"Vance! Vance!" said the patient, as if trying to force his memory upon some particular point. Then he added: "Can't do it! And yet I've seen him afore somewhar."

"Well, my poor fellow, I must leave you. Good bye."

"Why, this hand is small and white as a woman's!" said the patient, touching Vance's fingers carefully as he might have touched some fragile flower. "Yer'll come agin to see me—woan't yer?"

"Yes, I'll not forget it."—"Call to-morrow, will yer?"—"Yes, if I am alive I'll call."—"Thahnk yer, strannger. Good-bye."

Giving a few dollars to the surgeon for the patient's benefit, Vance quitted the hospital. An hour afterwards, in his room at the St. Charles, he penned and sent this note:—

"To PERDITA: I shall not be able to see you again to-day. Content yourself as well as you can in the company of Mozart and Beethoven, Bellini and Donizetti, Irving and Dickens, Tennyson and Longfellow. The company is not large, but you will find it select. Unless some very serious engagement should prevent, I will see you to-morrow.

"VANCE."

This little note was read and re-read by Clara, till the darkness of night came on. She studied the forms of the letters, the curves and flourishes, all the peculiarities of the chirography, as if she could derive from them some new hints for her incipient hero-worship. Then, lighting the gas, she acted on the advice of the letter, by devoting herself to the performance of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.

Vance meanwhile, after a frugal dinner, eliminated from luxurious viands, rang the bell, and sent his card to Miss Tremaine. Laura's mother was an invalid, and Laura herself, relieved from maternal restraint, had been lately in the habit of receiving and entertaining company, much to her own satisfaction, as she now had an enlarged field for indulging a propensity not uncommon among

young women who have been much admired and much indulged.

Laura was a predestined flirt. Had she been brought up between the walls of a nunnery, where the profane presence of a man had never been known, she would instinctively have launched into coquetry the first time the bishop or the gardener made his appearance.

Having heard Madame Brugière, the fashionable widow, speak of Mr. Vance as the handsomest man in New Orleans, Laura was possessed with the desire of bringing him into her circle of admirers. So, one day after dinner, she begged her father to stroll with her through a certain corridor of the hotel. She calculated that Vance would pass there on his way to his room. She was right. "Is that Mr. Vance, papa?"—"Yes, my dear."—"Oh, do introduce him. They say he's such a superb musician. We must have him to try our new piano."—"I'm but slightly acquainted with him."—"No matter. He goes into the best society, you know." (The father didn't know it—neither did the daughter—but he took it for granted that she spoke by authority.) "He's very rich, too," added Laura. This was enough to satisfy the paternal conscience. "Good evening, Mr. Vance! Lively times these!

Let me make you acquainted with my daughter, Miss Laura. We shall be happy to see you in our parlour, Mr. Vance." Vance bowed, and complimented the lady on a tea-rose she held in her hand. "Did you ever see anything more beautiful?" she asked.—"Never till now," he replied.—"Ah! The rose is yours. You've fairly won it, Mr. Vance; but there's a condition attached: you must promise to call and try my new piano."—"Agreed. I'll call at an early day." He bowed, and passed on. "A very charming person," said Laura.—"Yes, a gentleman evidently," said the father.—"And he isn't redolent of cigar-smoke and whisky, as nine-tenths of you ill-smelling men are," added Laura.—"Tut! Don't abuse your future husband, my dear."—"How old should you take Mr. Vance to be?"—"About thirty-five."—"Oh, no! Not a year over thirty."—"He's too old to be caught by any chaff of yours, my dear!"—"Now, papa! I'll not walk with you another minute!"

A few evenings afterwards, as Laura sat lonely in her private parlour, a waiter put into her hand a card on which was simply written in pencil, "MR. VANCE." She did not try to check the start of exultation with which she said, "Show him in."

Laura was now verging on her eighteenth year.

A little above the Medicean height, her well-rounded shoulders and bust prefigured for her womanhood a voluptuous fulness. Nine men out of ten would have pronounced her beautiful. Had she been put up at a slave-vendue, the auctioneer, if a connoisseur, would have expatiated thus: "Let me call your attention, gentlemen, to this *very* superior article. Faultless, you see, every way. In limb and action perfect. Too showy, perhaps, for a field-hand, but excellent for the parlour. Look at that profile. The Grecian type in its perfection! Nose a little *retroussé*, but what piquancy in the expression! Hair dark, glossy, abundant. Cheeks—do you notice that little dimple when she smiles? Teeth sound and white: open the mouth of the article and look, gentlemen. Just feel of those arms, gentlemen. Complexion smooth, brilliant, perfect. Did you ever see a head and neck more neatly set on the shoulders?—and such shoulders! What are you prepared to bid, gentlemen, for this very, very superior article?"

Laura was attired in a light checked foulard silk, trimmed with cherry-coloured ribbons. Running to the mirror, she adjusted here and there a curl, and lowered the gauze over her shoulders. Then, resuming her seat, she took Tennyson's "In Me-

moriam" from the table, and became intensely absorbed in the perusal.

As Vance entered, Laura said to herself, "I know I'm right as to his age!" Nor was her estimate surprising. During the last two lustrums of his nomadic life, he had rather reinvigorated than impaired his physical frame. He never counteracted the hygienic benefits of his Arab habits by vices of eating and drinking. Abjuring all liquids but water, often sleeping on the bare ground under the open sky, he so hardened and purified his constitution that those constantly recurring local inflammations which, under the name of "colds" of some sort, beset men in their ordinary lives in cities, were to him almost unknown. And so he was what the Creoles called *bien conservé*.

Laura, with a pretty affectation of surprise, threw down her book, and, with extended hand, rose to greet her visitor. To him the art he had first studied on the stage had become a second nature. Every movement was proportioned, graceful, harmonious. He fell into no inelegant posture. He did not sit down in a chair without naturally falling into the attitude that an artist would have thought right. That consummate ease and grace

which play-goers used to admire in James Wallack were remarkable in Vance, whether in motion or in repose.

Taking Laura's proffered hand, he led her to the sofa, where they sat down. After some commonplaces in regard to the news of the day, he remarked: "By the way, do you know of any good school in the city for a young girl, say of fourteen?"

"Yes. Mrs. Gentry's school, which I have just left, is one of the most select in the city. Here's her card."—"But are her pupils all from the best families?"—"I believe so. Indeed, I know the families of all except one."—"And who is *she*?"—"Her name is Ellen Murray, but I call her Darling. I think she must be preparing either for the opera or the ballet; for in music, singing, and dancing she's far beyond the rest of us."—"And behind you in the other branches, I suppose."—"I'm afraid not. She won't be kept back. She must have given twice the time to study that any of the rest of us gave."—"Does she seem to be of gentle blood?"—"Yes; though Mrs. Gentry tells us she is low-born. For all that, she's quite pretty, and knows more than Madame Groux herself about dress. And so Darling and I, in spite

of Mrs. Gentry, were getting to be quite intimate, when we quarrelled on the slavery question, and separated.”—“What! the little miss is a politician, is she?”—“Oh! she’s a downright Abolitionist! Talks like a little fury against the wrongs of slavery. I couldn’t endure it, and so cast her off.”—“Bring her to me. I’ll convert her in five minutes.”—“Oh, you vain man! But I wish you could hear her sing. Such a voice!”—“Couldn’t you give me an opportunity? You shouldn’t have quarrelled with her, Miss Tremaine! It rather amuses me that she should talk treason. Why not arrange a little musical party? I’ll come and play for you a whole evening, if you’ll have Darling to sing.”—“Oh, that would be so charming! But then Darling and I have separated. We don’t speak.”—“Nonsense! Miss Laura Tremaine can afford to offer the olive branch to a poor little outcast.”—“To be sure I can, Mr. Vance! And I’ll have her here, if I have to bring her by stratagem.”—“Admirable! Just send for me as soon as you secure the bird. And keep her strictly caged till I can hear her sing.”—“I’ll do it, Mr. Vance. Even the dragon Gentry shall not prevent it.”—“Shall I try the new piano?”—“Oh, I have been so longing to hear you!”

And Vance, seating himself at the instrument, exerted himself as he had rarely done to fascinate an audience. Laura, who had taste, if not diligence, in music, was charmed and bewildered. "How delightful! How very delightful!" she exclaimed. Vance was growing dangerous.

At that moment the servant entered with two cards.

"Did you tell them I'm in?"—"Yes, Mahm-zel."

"Well, then," said Laura, with an air of disappointment, "show them up." And handing the cards to Vance, she asked, "Shall I introduce them?"

"Mr. Robert Onslow—Charles Kenrick. Certainly."

The young men entered, and were introduced.

Kenrick drew near and said:—"Mr. Vance, allow me the honour of taking you by the hand. I've heard of the poor fellow you rescued from the halter of Judge Lynch. In the name of humanity, I thank you. That poor ragged declaimer merely spoke my own sentiments."

"Indeed! What did he say?"

"He said, according to the Delta's report, that this was the rich man's war; that the labouring

man who should lift his arm in defence of slavery was a fool. All which I hold to be true."

"Pshaw, Charles! A truce to politics!" said Onslow. "Why will you thrust it into faces that frown on your wild notions?"

"Miss Tremaine reigns absolute in this room," rejoined Vance; "and from the slavery she imposes we have no desire, I presume, to be free."

"And her order is," cried Laura, "that you sink politics. Thank you, Mr. Vance, for vindicating my authority."

There was no further jarring. Both the young men were personally fine specimens of the Southern chivalric race. Onslow was the larger and handsomer. He seemed to unite with a feminine gentleness the traits that make a man popular and beloved among men; a charming companion, sunny-tempered, amiable, social, ever finding a soul of goodness in things evil, and making even trivialities surrender enjoyments, where to other men all was barren. Life was to him a sort of grand picnic, and a man's true business was to make himself as agreeable as possible, first to himself, and then to others.

Far different seemed Kenrick. To him the important world was that of ideas. All else was

unsubstantial. The thought that was uppermost must be uttered. Not to conciliate, not to please, even in the drawing-room, would he be an assentator, a flatterer. To him truth was the one thing needful, and therefore, in season and out of season, must error be combated whenever met. The times were of a character to intensify in him all his idiosyncrasies. He could not smile, and sing, and utter small-talk while his country was being weighed in the balance of the All-just—and her institutions purged as by fire.

And so to Laura he dwindled into insignificance.

Vance rose to go.

“One song. Indeed, I must have one,” said Laura. Vance complied with her request, singing a favourite song of Estelle’s, Reichardt’s

Du liebes Aug', du lieber Stern,
Du bist mir nah', und doch so fern! *

Then, pressing Laura’s proffered hand, and bowing, he left.

“What a voice! what a touch!” said Onslow.

“It was enchanting!” cried Laura.

“I thought he was a different sort of man,” sighed Kenrick.

* Beloved eye, beloved star,
Thou art so near, and yet so far!

CHAPTER IX.

CONFESSIONS OF A MEAN WHITE.

Throw thyself on thy God, nor mock him with feeble denial;
 Sure of his love, and oh, sure of his mercy at last;
 Bitter and deep though the draught, yet drain thou the cup of
 thy trial,
 And in its healing effect smile at the bitterness past.

Lines composed by Sir John Herschel in a dream.

AFTER an early breakfast the following morning, Vance proceeded to the hospital. The patient had been expecting him.

"He has seemed to know just how near you've been for the last hour," said the nurse. "He followed"—

"Sit down, Mr. Vance, please," interrupted the patient.

Vance drew a chair near to the pillow and sat down.

"It all kum ter me last night, Mr. Vance! Now I remember whar 'twas I met yer. But fust lem me tell yer who an' what I be. My name's

Quattles. I was born in South Kerliny, not fur from Columby. I was what the niggers call a *mean white*, and my father was a mean white afore me, and all my brothers they was mean whites, and my sisters they mahrrid mean whites. The one thing we was raised ter do fiust-rate, and what we tuk ter kindly from the start, was ter shirk labour. We was taught 'twas degradin' ter do useful work like a nigger does, so we all tried hard ter find su'thin' that mowt be easy an' not useful."

"My dear fellow," interrupted Vance, who saw the man was suffering, "you're fatiguing yourself too much. Rest awhile."

"No, Mr. Vance. You mus'n't mind these twichin's an' spazums like. They airn't quite as bahd as they look. Wall, as I war sayin', one cuss of slavery ar', it drives the poor whites away from honest labour; makes 'em think it's mean-sperretid ter hoe corn an' plant 'taters. An' this feelin', yer see ar' all ter the profit uv the rich men—the Hammonds, Rhetts, an' Draytons—'cause why? 'cause it leaves ter the rich all the good land, an' drives the poor whites ter pickin' up a mean livin', any way they kin, outside ov hard work! Howsomever, I didn't see this; an'

so, like other mis'rabable fools, I thowt I war a sort uv a 'ristocrat myself, 'cause I could put on airs afore a nigger. An' this feelin' the slave-owners try to keep up in the mean whites; try to make 'em feel proud they're not niggers, though the hull time the poor cusses fare wuss nor any nigger in a rice-swamp."

"My friend," said Vance, "you've got at the truth at last, though I fear you've been long about it."

"Yer may bet high on that, Mr. Vance! How I used ter cuss the Abolishuners, an' go ravin' mahd over the meddlin' Yankees! Wall, what d' yer think war the best thing South Kerliny could do fur me, after never off'rin' me a chance ter larn ter read an' write? I'll tell yer what the *peculiar* permoted me ter. I riz to be forman uv a rat-pit."

"Of a *what*?" interrogated Vance.

"Of a rat-pit. There war a feller in Charleston who kept a rat-pit, whar a little tareyer dog killed rats, so many a minute, to please the sportin' gentry an' other swells. Price uv admission one dollar. The swells would come an' bet how many rats the dog would kill in a minute—'twas sometimes thirty, 'twas sometimes forty, and wunst

'twas fifty. My bus'ness was ter throw the rats, one after another, inter the pit. We'd a big cage with a hole in the top, an' I had ter put my bar hand in, an' throw out the rats fast as I could, one by one. The tareyer would spring an' break the backs uv the varmints with one jerk uv his teeth. Great bus'ness for a white man—warn't it? So much more genteel than plantin' an' hoein'! Wall, I kept at that pleasant trade five yars, an' then lost my place 'cause both hands got so badly bit I couldn't pull out the rats no longer."

"You must have seen things from a bad standpoint, my friend."

"Bad as 'twas, 'twas better nor the slavery stand-pint I kum ter next. Yer'v heerd tell uv Jeff McTavish? Wall, Jeff hahd an overseer who got shot in the leg by a runaway swamp nigger, an' so I was hired as a sort uv overseer's mate. I warn't brung up ter be very tender 'bout niggers, Mr. Vance; but the way niggers was treated on that air plantation was too much even for my tough stomach. I've seen niggers shot down dead by McTavish fur jest openin' thar big lips to answer him when he was mad. There warn't ten uv his slaves out uv a hundred, that

warn't scored all up an' down the back with marks uv the lash." *

"Did you whip them?" inquired Vance.

"I didn't do nothin' else; but I did it slack, an' McTavish he found it out, and begun jawin' me. An' I guv it to him back, and we hahd it thar purty steep, an' bymeby he outs with his revolver, but I war too spry for him. I tripped him up, an' he hahd ter ask pardon uv a mean white wunst in his life, an' no mistake. A little tahmrin' water, please."

Vance administered a spoonful, and the patient resumed his story.

"In coorse, I hahd ter leave McTavish. Then for five years I'd a tight time of it keepin' wooded up. What with huntin' and fishin', thimble-riggin' an' stealin', I got along somehow, an' riz to be a sort uv steamboat gambler on the Misippy. 'Twas thar I fust saw you, Mr. Vance."

"On the Mississippi! When and where?"

* General Ullmann writes from New Orleans, June 6, 1863, to Governor Andrew: "Every man (freed negro) presenting himself to be recruited, strips to the skin. My surgeons report to me that *not one in fifteen* is free from marks of severe lashing. More than one half are rejected because of disability from lashing with whips, and the biting of dogs on calves and thighs. It is frightful. Hundreds have weals on their backs as large as one of your largest fingers."

"Some fifteen yars ago, on boord the Pontiac, jest afore she blowed up."

"Indeed! I've no recollection of meeting you."

"Don't yer remember Kunnle D'Lancy Hyde?"

"Perfectly."

"Wall, I war his shadder. He couldn't go nowhar I didn't foller. If he took snuff, I sneezed. If he got drunk, I staggered. Don't yer remember a darkish, long-haired feller, he called Quattles?"

"Are you that man?" exclaimed Vance, restraining his emotion.

"I'm nobody else, Mr. Vance, an' it ain't fur nothin' I've got yer here to har what I've ter tell. Ef I don't stop to say I'm sorry for the mean things I done, 'taint 'cause I hain't some shame 'bout it, but 'cause time's short. When the Pontiac blowed up, I an' the Kunnle (he's 'bout as much uv a kunnle as I'm uv a bishop), we found ou'selves on that part uv the boat whar least damage was did. We was purty well corned, for we'd been drinkin' some, but the smash-up sobered us. The Kunnle's fust thowt was fur his niggers. Says I: 'Let the niggers slide. We sh'll be almighty lucky ef we keep out of hell ou'selves.' 'Twas ev'ry man for hisself, yer know."

"Were you on the forward part of the wreck?"

"Yes, Mr. Vance, an' it soon began ter sink. Poor critters, men an' women, some scalded, some strugglin' in the water, war cryin' for help. The Kunnle an' I"—

"Stop a moment," said Vance; and, drawing out paper and pencil, he made copious notes.

"As I war sayin', Mr. Vance, the Kunnle an' I got four life-presarvin' stools, lahshed 'em together, an' begun ter make off for the shore. Says I, 'We owt ter save one uv those women folks.' A yaller gal, with a white child in her arms, was screamin' out for us to take her an' the child. Jest then she got a blow on the head from a block that fell from one uv the masts. It seemed ter make her wild, an' she dropped inter the water, but held on tight ter the young 'un. Says the Kunnle to me, says he, 'Now, Cappn, you take the gal, an I'll take the bebbly.' An' so we done it, and all got ashore safe. We lahnded on the Tennessee side. The sun hadn't riz, but 'twas jest light enough ter see. We made tracks away from the river till we kum ter a nigger's deserted hut, out of sight 'tween two hills. Thar we left the yaller gal and the bebbly. The gal seemed kind o' crazy; so we fastened 'em in."

"And the child?" asked Vance. "Did you know whose it was?"

"O yes, I knowed it, 'cause I'd seen the yaller gal more'n a dozen times, off an' on, leadin' the little thing about. The Berwicks, a North'n family, was the parrents. Wall, the Kunnle an' I, we went back ter the river to see what was goin' on. The sun was up now. The Champion bahd turned back to give help. Poor critters war dyin' all round from scalds and bruises. All at wunst the Kunnle an' I kum upon a crowd round Mr. Berwick, who lay thar on the ground bahdly wounded. His wife lay dead close by. He kept askin' fur his child. A feller named Burgess told him he seed the yaller gal an' child go overboord, an' that they must have drowned. Prehaps he did see 'em in the water, but he didn't see us pick 'em up. Old Onslow he said he an' his boy had sarched ev'rywhar, but couldn't find the child nowhar. They b'leeved she was drowned. A drop uv water, Mr. Vance."

"And didn't you undeceive them?" asked Vance, giving the water.

"No, Mr. Vance. The Kunnle seed a prize in that yaller gal, and the Devil put an idee inter his head. Says the Kunnle to me, says he, 'Now

foller yer leader, Cappn.' (He used to call me Cappn.) 'Swar jest as yer har me swar.' Then up he steps an' says to Mr. Onslow, 'Judge, it's all true what Mr. Burgess says; the yaller gal, with the child in her arms, war crowded overboard. This gemmleman an' I tried to save them. Ef we didn't, may I be shot. We throw'd the gal a life-presarver, but she couldn't hold on, no how. Fust the child went under, an' we was so chilled we couldn't save it. Then the gal let go her grip uv the stool an' sunk. 'Twar as much as we could do ter git ashore ou'selves.' "

"Did the judge put you to your oaths?" asked Vance.

"Yes, Mr. Vance. He swar'd us both; then writ down all we said, read it over ter us, and we put our names ter it, an' 'twas witnessed all right. The feller Burgess bahcked us up by sayin' he see us in the water jest afore the gal fell, which was all true. It seemed a plain case. The judge tell'd it all ter Mr. Berwick, an' he growed sort o' wild, an' died soon arter. What bekummed of *you* all that time, Mr. Vance?"

"I landed on the Arkansas side," said Vance. "I supposed the Berwick family all lost. The bodies of the parents I saw and identified, and

Burgess told me he'd talked with two men who saw the child go down."

"Wall, Mr. Vance, thar' ain't much more uv a story. We went ter Memphis. The Kunnle swelled round consid'able, and got his name inter the newspapers. But the yaller gal she was sort o' crack-brained. She war no use ter us or ter the child. The Kunnle got low-sperreted. He'd made a bad spec, ahter all. He'd lost his niggers; an' the yeller gal, she as he hoped ter sell in Noo Orleenz fur sixteen hunderd dollars, she turned out a fool. Howzomever, he found a lightish, genteel sort uv a nigger, a quack doctor, who took her off our hands. He said as how she mowt be 'panned an' made as good as noo."

"And what did you do with the child?"

"Wall, another bright idee hahd struck the Kunnle. Says he, 'Colour this young'un up a little, and she'd bring risin' uv four hundred dollars at a vahndoo. Any mahn, used ter buyin' niggers, would see at wunst she'd grow up ter be a val'able fancy article. Ef I could afford it, I'd hold her on spekilation till she war fifteen.' Wall, Mr. Vance, uv all the mean things I ever done, the meanest was to let the Kunnle, whan we got ter Noo Orleenz, take that poor little patient

thing, as I had toted all the way down from Memphis, an' sell her ter the highest bidder."

With an irrepressible groan, Vance walked to the window. When he returned, he looked with pity on Quattles, and said, "Proceed!"

"Yer see, Mr. Vance, I owed the Kunnle two hunderd dollars, he'd won from me at euchre. He offered ter make it squar ef I'd give up my int'rest in the child. Wall, I'd got kind o' fond uv the little thing; an' 't wasn't till I got blind drunk on't that I could bring my mind ter say yes. The thowt uv what I done that day has kept me drunk most ever sence. But the Kunnle, he tried to comfort me like. Says he, 'The child was fairly ourn, seein' as how we saved it from drownin'. Don't take on so, old feller,' says he. 'Think yerself lucky ef yer hahvn't nothin' wuss nor that agin yerself.' But 't was no go. He never could make me hold up my head agin like as I used ter; an' we two cut adrift; an' hain't kept 'count uv each other sence."

"How did he dispose of the child?"

"He stained her skin till she looked like a half mulatter, an' then he jest got Ripper, the auctioneer, ter sell her."

"Who bought the child?"

"Wall, Cash bowt her. That's all I ever could find out. Ef Ripper knowed more, he wouldn't tell."

"To whom did you sell the yellow girl?"

"We didn't sell her at all. Was glad to git her off our hahnds at no price. The chap what took her called hisself Dr. Davy. He was a free nigger, a trav'lin' quack—one of those fellers that 'tises to cure ev'ry thing."

"When did you last hear of him?"

"The last I heerd tell uv Davy, he war in Natchez, and that war five years ago."

"What became of the yellow girl?"

"Wall, thar's a quar story 'bout that. Whan we fust saw that air gal on the wreck, she was callin' out ter us, 'Take me an' the child with yer!' She said it wunst, an' hahd jest begun ter say it again, an' hahd got as fur as *Take*, whan the block hit her on the head, an' she fell inter the water. Wall, six months ahter, Davy took that air gal ter a surgeon in Philadelphia, an' hahd her 'panned; an' jest as the crushed bone war lifted from the brain, that gal cried out '—me an' the child with yer!' Shoot me ef she didn't finish the cry she'd begun jest six months afore.* She

* Abercrombie relates an authenticated case of the same kind.

got back her senses all straight, an' Davy made her his wife."

"Did you keep anything that belonged to the child?"

"Jest you feel in the pockets uv them pants under my piller, and git out my pus."

Vance obeyed, and drew forth a small bag of wash-leather. This he emptied on the coverlet, the contents being a few dimes and five-cent pieces, a tonga-bean, and a small pill-box covered with cotton-wool and tied round with twine.

"Thar! Open that ar' box," said the patient.

Vance opened it, and took out a pair of little sleeve-buttons, gold with a setting of coral. Examining them, he found on the under surface the inscription C. A. B. in diminutive characters.

"I'll tell you how 'twas," said the wounded man. "That night of the 'splosion the yaller gal an' the child must have gone ter bed without ondressin'; for they'd thar cloze all on. Most like the gal fell asleep an' forgot. Soon as we touched the shore, the Kunnle says ter me, says

A woodman, while employed with his axe, was hit on the head by a falling tree. He remained in a semi-comatose state for a whole year. On being trepanned, he uttered an exclamation which was found to be the completion of the sentence he had been in the act of uttering when struck twelve months before.

he, 'Cap'n, you cahrry the child, an' I'll pilot the gal.' Wall; I took the child in my arms, an' as I cahrr'd her, I seed she wore gold buttons on the sleeves uv her little pelisse—a pair on each; an', thinks I, the Kunnle will pocket them buttons sure. So I pocketed 'em myself; but when it kum to partin' with the child, I jest took one pair uv the buttons, and sowed 'em on inside uv the bosom uv her little shirt whar they wouldn't be seen. The other pair is that thar. Take 'em an' keep 'em, Mr. Vance."

"Have you any article of clothing belonging to her?"

"Not a rag, Mr. Vance. They all went with her."

"Did you notice any mark on the clothes?"

"Yes, they was marked C. A. B. in letters worked in hahnsum with white silk."

"Was that the kind of letter?" asked Vance, who, having drawn the cypher in old English, held it before the patient's eyes.

"Yes, them's um. I remember, 'cause I used to ondress the child. An', now I think uv it, one uv her eyes was bluish, an' t'other grayish."

"What day was it you parted with the child?"

"The same day she was sold."

"When was that?"

"It must have been in May follerin' the 'slosion. Lem me see. 'Twas that day I got the pill-box. I'd been ter the doctor's fur some physickin' stuff. He give me a prescrip, an' I went an' got some pills in that air box, an' then throwed the pills away an' kept the box."

Vance glanced at the cover. The apothecary's name and the number of the prescription were legible. Vance put the box in his pocket.

"Can't yer think uv suthin' else?" asked Quattles.

"Only this," replied Vance: "How shall I manage Hyde?"

"Wall, ef the Kunnle sh'd hold up his milk, you just say ter him these eer words: 'Dorothy Rusk must be provided for. What kn I do fur her?' The widder Rusk is his sister, yer see, an' that's the one soft spot the Kunnle's got."

Vance carefully recorded the mysterious words; then asked, "Do you remember Peek, the runaway slave Hyde had in charge?"

"In coorse I do," said Quattles, twisting with pain from his wound. "Should you ever see that nigger, Mr. Vance, tell him that Amos Slink, St. Joseph Street, kn tell him su'thing' 'bout his

wife. Amos wunst tell'd me how he 'coyed her down from Montreal. 'Twas through that same lawyer chap that cum it over Peek."

"Can Amos identify you as the Quattles of the Pontiac?"

"In coorse he can, for he knowed all 'bout me at the time."

"And now, my friend, I wish to have this testimony of yours sworn to, and witnessed; but I'm overtasking your strength."

"Do it, Mr. Vance. Help me ter lose my strength, ef yer think I kn do any good tellin' the truth."

"Can you get along without this opiate two hours longer?"

"Yes, Mr. Vance, I kn do without it altogether."

"Then I'll leave you for two hours."

"One word, Mr. Vance."

"What is it?"

"Did yer ever pray?"

"Yes; every man prays who tries to do good or undo evil. You've been praying for the last hour, my friend."

"How did yer know that? I've been thinkin' of it, that's a fak. But I'm not up to it, Mr.

Vance. Could you pray for me jest three minutes?"

"Willingly, my poor fellow."

And kneeling at the little cot, Vance, holding a hand of the sufferer, prayed for him so tenderly, so fervently, and so searchingly withal, that the poor dying outcast wept as he had never wept before. Oh, precious tears, parting the mist that hung upon his future (even as clouds are parted that hide the sunset's glories), and revealing to his spiritual eyes new possibilities of being, fruits of repentance, through a mercy which (God be thanked!) is not measured by the mercy of men.

Leaving the hospital, Vance stepped into an office, and drew up, in the form of a deposition, all the facts elicited from Quattles. His next step was to find Amos Slink. That gentleman had settled down in the second-hand clothing business. Vance made a liberal purchase of hospital clothing; and then adverted to the past exploits of Amos in the "nigger-catching" line. Amos proudly produced letters to authenticate his prowess. They bore the signature of Charlton. "I want you to lend me those letters, Mr. Slink."

"Couldn't do it, Mr. Vance. Them letters I mean to hand down to my children."

"Well, it's of no consequence. I'll go into the next store for the rest of my goods."

"Don't think of it. Here! take the letters. Only return 'em." Vance not only secured the letters, but got Mr. Slink to go with him to the hospital to identify Quattles.

Then, on his way, enlisting three friends who were good Union men, one of them being a justice of the peace, Vance led them where the wounded man lay. Slink, who was known to the parties, identified the patient as the Mr. Quattles of the Pontiac; and the identification was duly recorded and sworn to. Vance then read his notes aloud to Quattles, whose competency to listen and understand was formally attested by the surgeon. The justice administered the oath. Quattles put his name to the document, and the signature was duly witnessed by all present.

No sooner was the act completed than the patient sank into unconsciousness. "He'll not rally again," said the surgeon. A quick, heavy breathing, gradually growing faint and fainter,—and lo! there was a smile on the face, but the spirit that had left it there had fled!

Vance first went to the apothecary whose name

was on the pill-box. "Did Mr. Gargle keep the books in which he pasted his prescriptions?"

"Yes, he had them for twenty years back."

"Would he look in the volume for 18—, for a certain number?"

"Willingly."

In two minutes the number was found, and the day of the prescription fixed. Vance then proceeded to the office of *L'Abeille*, turned to the newspaper of that day, and there, in the advertising columns, found a sale advertised by P. Ripper & Co., auctioneers. It was a sale of a "lot" of negroes; and as a sort of postscript to the specifications was the following:—

"Also, one very promising little girl, an orphan, two years old, almost white; can take care of herself; promises to be very pretty; has straight, brown hair, regular features, first-rate figure. Warranted sound and healthy. Amateurs who would like to train up a companion to their tastes will find this a rare opportunity to purchase."

Not pausing to indulge the emotions which these cruel words awoke, Vance went in search of Ripper & Co. The firm had been broken up more than ten years before. Not one of the partners was in the city. They had disappeared,

and left no trace. Were any of their old account-books in the warehouse? No. The building had been burnt to the ground, and a new one erected on its site.

“Where next?” thought Vance. “Plainly to Natchez, to see if I can learn anything of Davy and his wife.”

CHAPTER X.

MEETINGS AND PARTINGS.

I hold it true, whate'er befall—
 I feel it when I sorrow most—
 'Tis better to have loved and lost
 Than never to have loved at all.!

Tennyson.

It being too late to take the boat for Natchez, Vance proceeded to the St. Charles. The gong for the five o'clock ordinary had sounded. Entering the dining-hall, he was about taking a seat, when he saw Miss Tremaine motioning to him to occupy one vacant by her side.

"Truly an enterprising young lady!" But what could he do?

"I'm so glad to see you, Mr. Vance! I've not forgotten my promise. I called to-day on Mrs. Gentry—found her in the depths. Miss Murray has disappeared—absconded—nobody knows where!"

"Indeed! After what you've said of her sing-

ing, I'm very anxious to hear her. Do try to find her!"

"I'll do what I can, Mr. Vance. There's a mystery. Of that much I'm persuaded from Mrs. Gentry's manner."

"You musn't mind her notions on slavery."

"O no, Mr. Vance! I shall turn her over to you for conversion."

"Should you succeed in entrapping her, detain her till I come back from Natchez, which will be before Sunday."

"Be sure I'll hold on to her."

Mr. Tremaine came in, and began to talk politics. Vance was sorry he had an engagement. The big clock of the hall pointed to seven o'clock. He rose, bowed, and left.

"Why," sighed Laura, "can't other gentlemen be as agreeable as this Mr. Vance? He knows all about the latest fashions; all about modes of fixing the hair; all about music and dancing; all about the opera and the theatre; in short, what is there the man doesn't know?"

Papa was too absorbed in his terrapin soup to answer.

Let us follow Vance to the little house, scene of his brief, fugitive days of delight. He stood under

the old magnolia in the tender moonlight. The gas was down in Clara's room. She was at the piano, extemporizing some low and plaintive variations on a melody by Moore, "When twilight dews are falling soft." Suddenly she stopped, and put up the gas. There was a knock at her door. She opened it, and saw Vance. They shook hands as if they were old friends.

"Where are the Bernards?"

"They are out promenading. I told them I was not afraid."

"How have you passed your time, Miss Perdita?"

"O, I've not been idle. Such choice books as you have here! And then, what a variety of music!"

"Have you studied any of the pieces?"

"Not many. That from Schubert."

"Please play it for me."

Tacitly accepting him as her teacher, she played it without embarrassment. Vance checked her here and there, and suggested a change. He uttered no other word of praise than to say: "If you'll practise six years longer four hours a day, you'll be a player."

"I shall do it!" said Clara.

"Have you heard that famous Hallelujah Chorus, which the Northern soldiers sing?"

"No, Mr. Vance."

"No? Why, 'tis in honour of John Brown (any relation of Perdita?) You shall hear it."

And he played the well-known air, now appropriated by the hand-organs. Clara asked for a repetition, that she might remember it.

"Sing me something," he said.

Clara placed on the reading-frame the song of "Pestal."

"Not that, Perdita. What possessed you to study that?"

"It suited my mood. Will you not hear it?"

"No! . . . Yes, Perdita. Pardon my abruptness. But that song was the first I ever heard from lips, O so fair and dear to me!"

Clara put aside the music, and walked away toward the window. Vance went up to her. He could see that she was with difficulty restraining her tears.

O, if this man whose very presence inspired such confidence and hope—if it was sweeter to him to *remember* another than to *listen* to her—where in the wide world should she find, in her desperate strait, a friend?

There was that in her attitude which reminded Vance of Estelle. Some lemon-blossoms in her hair intensified the association by their odours. For a moment it was as if he had thrown off the burden of twenty years, and was living over, in Clara's presence, that ambrosial hour of first love on the very spot of its birth. "For O, she stood beside him like his youth—transformed for him the real to a dream, clothing the palpable and the familiar with golden exhalations of the dawn!" Be wary, Vance! One look, one tone amiss, and there'll be danger!

"Let us talk over your affairs," he said. "Tomorrow I must leave for Natchez. Will you remain here till I come back?"

Clara leaned out of the window a moment, as if to enjoy the balmy evening, and then, calmly taking a seat, replied: "I think 'twill be best for me to lay my case before Miss Tremaine. True, we parted in a pet, but she may not be implacable. Yes, I will call on her. To you, a stranger, what return for your kindness can I make?"

"This return, Perdita: let me be your friend. As soon as 'tis discovered you've no money, your position may become a painful one. Let me

supply you with funds. I'm rich; and my only heir is my country."

"No, Mr. Vance! I've no claim upon you—none whatever. What I want for the moment is a shelter; and Laura will give me that, I'm confident."

Vance reflected a moment, and then, as if a plan had occurred to him by which he could provide for her without her knowing it, he replied: "We shall probably meet at the St. Charles. You can easily send for me, should you require my help. Be generous, and say you'll notify me, should there be an hour of need."

"I'll not fail to remember you in that event, Mr. Vance."

"Honour bright?"

"Honour bright, Mr. Vance!"

"Consider, Perdita, you can always find a home in this house. I shall give such directions to Mrs. Bernard as will make your presence welcome."

"Then I shall not feel utterly homeless. Thank you, Mr. Vance!"

"And by the way, Perdita, do not let Miss Tremaine know that we are acquainted."

"I'll regard your caution, Mr. Vance."

"We shall meet again, my dear young lady. Of that I feel assured."

"I hope so, Mr. Vance."

"And now, farewell! I'll tell Bernard to order a carriage and attend to your baggage. Good by, Perdita!"

"Good by, Mr. Vance."

Again they shook hands, and parted. Vance gave his directions to the Bernards, and then strolled home to his hotel. As he traversed the corridor leading to his room, he encountered Kenrick. Their apartments were nearly opposite.

"I was not aware we were such near neighbours, Mr. Kenrick."

"To me also 'tis a surprise—and a pleasant one. Will you walk in, Mr. Vance?"

"Yes, if 'tis not past your hour for visitors."

They went in, and Kenrick put up the gas. "I can't offer you either cigars or whisky; but you can ring for what you want."

"Is it possible you eschew alcohol and tobacco?"

"Yes," replied Kenrick; "I once indulged in cigars. But I found the use so offensive in others that I myself abandoned it in disgust. One sits down to converse with a person disguised as a gentleman, and suddenly a fume, as if from the

essence of old tobacco-pipes, mixed with odours from stale brandy-bottles, poisons the innocent air, and almost knocks one down. It's a mystery that ladies endure the nuisance of such breaths. My sensitive organ of smell has made me an anti-rum, anti-tobacco man."

"But I fear me you're a come-outer, Mr. Kenrick! Is it conservative to abuse tobacco and whisky? No wonder you are unsound on the slavery question!"

"Come up to the confessional, Mr. Vance! Admit that you're as much of an anti-slavery man as I am."

"More, Mr. Kenrick! If I were not, I might be quite as imprudent as you. And then I should put a stop to my usefulness."

"You puzzle me, Mr. Vance."

"Not as much as you've puzzled *me*, my young friend. Come here, and look in the mirror with me."

Vance took him by the hand and led him to a full-length looking-glass. There they stood looking at their reflections.

"What do you see?" asked Vance.

"Two rather personable fellows," replied Kenrick, laughing; "one of them ten or twelve years

older than the other; height of the two, about the same; figures very much alike, inclining to slimmness, but compact, erect, well-knit; hands and feet small; heads—I have no fault to find with the shape or size of either; hair similar in colour; eyes—as near as I can see, the two pairs resemble each other, and the crow’s-feet at the corners are the same in each; features—nose—brows—I see why you’ve brought me here, Mr. Vance! We are enough alike to be brothers.”

“Can you explain the mystery?” asked Vance, “for I can’t. Can there be any family relationship? I had an aunt, now deceased, who was married to a Louisianian. But his name was not Kenrick.”

“What was it?”

“Arthur Maclain.”

“My father! Cousin, your hand! My father changed his name, after his marriage, in order to inherit property. I can’t tell you how pleasant to me it is to meet one of my mother’s relations.”

They had come together still more akin in spirit than in blood. The night was all too short for the confidences they now poured out to each other. Vance told his whole story, pausing occasionally to

calm down the excitement which the narrative caused in his hearer.

When it was finished Kenrick said: "Cousin, count me your ally in compassing your vengeance. May God do so to me, and more also, if I do not give this beastly Slave Power blood for blood!"

"I can't help thinking, Charles," said Vance, "that your zeal has the purer origin. *Mine* sprang from a personal experience of wrong; yours, from an abstract conception of what is just; from those inner motives that point to righteousness and God."

"I almost wish sometimes," replied Kenrick, "that I had the spur of a great personal grievance to give body to my wrath. And yet slavery, when it lays its foul hand on *the least of these little ones*, ought to be felt by me also, and by all men! But now—now—I shall not lack the sting of a personal incentive. *Your* griefs, cousin, fall on my own heart, and shall not find the soil altogether barren. This Ratcliff—I know him well. He has been more than once at our house. A perfect type of the sort of beast born of slavery—moulded as in a matrix by slavery—kept alive by slavery! Take away slavery, and he would perish of inanition. He would be, like the plesiosaur,

a fossil monster, representative of an extinct genus."

"Cousin," said Vance, "all you lack is to unite the serpent with the dove. Be content to bide your time. Here in Louisiana lies your work. We must make the whole western bank of the Mississippi free soil. Texas can be taken care of in due time. But with a belt of freedom surrounding the Cotton States, the doom of slavery is fixed. Give me to see that day, and I shall be ready to say, 'Now, Lord, dismiss thy servant!'"

"I had intended to go North, and join the army of freedom," said Kenrick; "but what you say makes me pause."

"We must not be seen together much," resumed Vance. "And now, good night, or rather, good morning, for there's a glimmer in the east, premonitory of day. Ah, cousin! when I hear the braggarts around us, boasting about Confederate courage and Yankee cowardice, I can't help recalling an old couplet I used to spout, when an actor, from a play by Southern—

There is no courage but in innocence,
No constancy but in an honest cause!"

CHAPTER XI.

CLARA MAKES AN IMPORTANT PURCHASE.

Allow slavery to be ever so humane. Grant that the man who owns me is ever so kind. The wrong of him who presumes to talk of owning me is too unmeasured to be softened by kindness.

LAURA TREMAINE had just come in from a drive with her invalid mother, and stood in the drawing-room looking out on a company of soldiers. There was a knock at the door. A servant brought in a card. It said, "Will Laura see Darling?" The arrival, concurring so directly with Laura's wishes, caused a pleasurable shock. "Show her in," she said; and the next moment the maidens were locked in each other's embrace.

"O, you dear little good-for-nothing Darling!" said Laura, after there had been a conflux of kisses. "Could anything be more *apropos*? What's the meaning of all this? Have you really absconded? Is it a love affair? Tell me

all about it. Rely on my secrecy. I'll be close as bark to a tree."

"Will you solemnly promise," said Clara, "on your honour as a lady, not to reveal what I tell you?"

"As I hope to be saved, I promise," replied Laura.

"Then I will tell you the cause of my leaving Mrs. Gentry's. 'Twas only the day before yesterday she told me—look at me, Laura, and say if I look like it!—she told me I was a slave."

"A slave? Impossible! Why, Darling, you've a complexion whiter than mine."

"So have many slaves. The hue of my skin will not invalidate a claim."

"That's true. But who presumes to claim you?"

"Mr. Carberry Ratcliff."

"A friend of my father's! He's very rich. I'll ask him to give you up. Let me go to him at once."

"No, Laura, I've seen the man. 'Twould be hopeless to try to melt him. You must help me to get away."

"But you do not mean—surely you do not mean to—to—"

"To what, Laura? You seem gasping with horror at some frightful supposition. What is it?"

"You'd not think of running off, would you? You wouldn't ask me to harbour a fugitive slave?"

Clara looked at the door. The colour flew to her cheek—flamed up to her forehead. Her bosom heaved. Emotions of unutterable detestation and disgust struggled for expression. But had she not learnt the slave's first lesson, duplicity? Her secret had been confided to one who had forthwith showed herself untrustworthy. Bred in the heartless fanaticism which slavery engenders, Laura might give the alarm and have her stopped, should she rise suddenly to go. Farewell, then, white-robed Candour, and welcome Dissimulation!

After a pause, "What do you advise?" said Clara.

"Well, Darling, stay with me a week or two, then go quietly back to Mrs. Gentry's, and play the penitent."

"Hadn't I better go at once?" asked Clara, simulating meekness.

"O no, Darling! I can't possibly permit that. Now I've got you, I shall hold on till I've done

with you. Then we'll see if we can't persuade Mr. Ratcliff to free you. Who'd have thought of this little Darling being a slave!"

"But hadn't I better write to Mrs. Gentry and tell her where I am?"

"No, no. She'll only be forcing you back. You shall do nothing but stay here till I tell you you may go. You shall play the lady for one week, at least. There's a Mr. Vance in the house, to whom I've spoken of your singing. He's wild to hear you. I've promised him he shall. I wouldn't disappoint him on any account."

Clara saw that, could she but command courage to fall in with Laura's selfish plans, it might, after all, be safer to come thus into the very focus of the city's life, than to seek some corner, penetrable to police-officers and slave-hunters.

"How will you manage?" asked Clara.

"What more simple?" replied Laura. "I'll take you right into my sleeping-room; you shall be my schoolmate, Miss Brown, come to pass a few days with me before going to St. Louis. Papa will never think of questioning my story."

"But I've no dresses with me."

"No matter. I've a plenty I've outgrown. They'll fit you beautifully. Come here into my

sleeping-room. It adjoins, you see. There! We're about of a height, though I'm a little stouter."

"It will not be safe for me to appear at the public table."

"Well, you shall be an invalid, and I'll send your meals from the table when I send mother's. Miss Brown from St. Louis! Let me see. What shall be your first name?"

"Let it be Perdita."

"Perdita? The lost one! Good. How quick you are! Perdita Brown! It does not sound badly. Mr. Onslow—Miss Brown—Miss Perdita Brown from St. Louis! Then you'll courtesy, and look so demure! Won't it be fun?"

Between grief and anger, Clara found disguise a terrible effort. So! Her fate so dark, so tragic, was to be Laura's pastime, not the subject of her grave and tender consideration!

Already had some of the traits, congenital with slavery, begun to develope themselves in Clara. Strategy now seemed to her as justifiable under the circumstances as it would be in escaping from a murderer, a lunatic, or a wild beast. Was not every pro-slavery man or woman her deadly foe—to be cheated, circumvented, robbed, nay, if need be, slain, in defence of her own inalienable right

of liberty? The thought that Laura was such a foe made Clara look on her with precisely the same feelings that the exposed sentinel might have toward the lurking picket-shooter.

An expression so strange flitted over Clara's face, that Laura asked: "What's the matter? Don't you feel well?"

Checking the exasperation surging in her heart, Clara affected frivolity. "Oh, I feel well enough," she replied. "A little tired—that's all. What if this Mr. Onslow should fall in love with me?"

"Oh, but that would be too good!" exclaimed Laura. "Between you and me, I owe him a spite. I've just heard he once said, speaking of me, 'Handsome—but no depth!' Hang the fellow! I'd like to punish him. He's proud as Lucifer. Wouldn't it be a joke to let him fall in love with a poor little slave?"

"So, you don't mean to fall in love with him yourself?"

"Oh no! He's good-looking, but poor. Can you keep a secret?"

"Yes."

"Well, I mean to set my cap for Mr. Vance."

"Possible?"

"Yes, Perdita. He's fine-looking, of the right

age, very rich, and so altogether fascinating! Father learnt yesterday that he pays an enormous tax on real estate."

"And is he the only string to your bow?"

"Oh no. But our best young men are in the army. Onslow is a captain. Oh, I mustn't forget Charles Kenrick. Onslow is to bring him here. Kenrick's father owns a whole brigade of slaves. Hark! Dear me! That was two o'clock. Will you have luncheon?"

"No, thank you. I'm not hungry."

"Then I must leave you. I've an appointment with my dressmaker. In the lower drawers there you'll find some of my last year's dresses. I've outgrown them. Amuse yourself with choosing one for to-night. We shall have callers."

Laura hurried off. Clara, terrified at the wrathfulness of her own emotions, paced the room for awhile, then dropped upon her knees in prayer. She prayed to be delivered from her own wild passions and from the toils of her enemies.

With softened heart, she rose and went to the window.

There, on the opposite sidewalk, stood Esha! Crumpling up some paper, Clara threw it out so as to arrest her attention, then beckoned to her to

come up. Stifling a cry of surprise, Esha crossed the street, and entered the hotel. The next minute she and Clara had embraced.

“But how did you happen to be there, Esha?”

“Bress de chile, I’ze been stahndin’ dar de last hour, but what for I knowed no more dan de stones. ’Twarn’t till I seed de chile hersef it ’curred ter me what for I’d been stahndin’ dar.”

“What happened after I left home?”

“Dar war all sort ob a fuss dat ebber you see, darlin’. Fust de ole woman war all struck ob a heap, like. Den Massa Ratcliff, he come, and he swar like de Debbles hisself. He cuss’d de ole woman and set her off cryin’, and den he swar at her all de more. Dar was a gen’ral break-down, darlin’. Massa Ratcliff he’b goin’ ter gib yer fotygraf ter all de policemen, an’ pay five hundred dollar ter dat one as’ll find yer. He sends us niggers all off—me an’ Tarquin an’ de rest—ter hunt yer up. He swar he’ll hab yer, if it takes all he’s wuth. He come agin ter-day an’ trow de ole woman inter de highstrikes. She say he’ll be come up wid, sure, an’ you’ll be come up wid, an’ eberybody else as doesn’t do like she wants ’em ter, am bound to be come up wid. Yah, yah, yah! Who’s afeard?”

"So the hounds are out in pursuit, are they?"

"Yes, darlin'. Look dar at dat man stahndin' at de corner. He'm one ob 'em."

"He's not dressed like a policeman."

"Bress yer heart, dese 'tektivs go dressed like de best gem'men about. Yer'd nebber suspek dey was doin' de work ob hounds."

"Well, Esha, I'm afraid to have you stay longer. I'm here with Miss Tremaine. She may be back any minute. I can't trust her, and wouldn't for the world have her see you here."

"No more would I, darlin'! Nebber liked dat air gal. She'm all fur self. But good bye, darlin'! It's sich a comfort ter hab seed you! Good bye!"

Esha slipped into the corridor and out of the hotel. Clara put on her bonnet, threw a thick veil over it, and hurried through St. Charles Street to a well-known cutlery store. "Show me some of your daggers," said she; "one suitable as a present to a young soldier."

The shopkeeper displayed several varieties. She selected one with a sheath, and paid for it; then dropping her veil, she passed into the street. As she left the shop, she saw a man affecting to look at some patent pistols in the window. He was well dressed, and sported a small cane.

"Hound number one!" thought Clara to herself, and, having walked slowly away in one direction, she suddenly turned, retraced her steps, then took a narrow cross-street that debouched into one of the principal business avenues. The individual had followed her, swinging his cane, and looking in at the shop-windows. But Clara did not let him see he was an object of suspicion. She slackened her pace, and pretended to be looking for an article of muslin, for she would stop and examine the fabrics that hung at the doors.

Suddenly she saw Esha approaching. Moment of peril! Should the old black woman recognise and accost her, she was lost. On came the old slave, her eyes wide open, and her thoughts intent on detecting detectives. Suddenly, to her consternation, she saw Clara stop before a "magasin" and take up some muslin on the shelf outside the window; and almost in the same glance, she saw the gentleman of the cane, watching both her and Clara out of the corners of his eyes. A sideway glance, quick as lightning from Clara, and delivered without moving her head, was enough to enlighten Esha. She passed on without a perceptible pause, and soon appeared to stumble, as if by accident, almost into the arms of the detective.

He caught her by the shoulder, and said, "Don't turn, but tell me if you noticed that woman there —there by Delmar's, with a green veil over her face?"

"Yes, massa, I seed a woman in a green veil."

"Well, are you sure she mayn't be the one?"

"Bress yer, massa, I owt to know de chile I'ze seed grow up from a bebbby. Reckon I could tell her widout seein' her face."

"Go back and take a look at her. There! she steps into the shop."

Glad of the opportunity of giving Clara a word of caution, Esha passed into Delmar's. Beckoning Clara into an alcove, she said: "De veil, darlin'! De veil! Dat ole rat would nebber hab suspek noting if't hahdn't been fur de veil. His part ob de play am ter watch eb'ry woman in a veil."

"I see my mistake, Esha. I've been buying a dagger. Look there!"

"De Lord save us!" said Esha, with a shudder, half of horror and half of sympathy. "Don't be in de street oftener dan yer kin help, darlin'? Remember de fotygrafs. Dar! I mus go."

Esha joined the detective. "Did you get a good sight of her?" he asked.

"Went right up an' spoke ter her," said Esha.

"She's jes as much dat gal as she's Madame Beauregard."

The detective, his vision of a \$500 *douceur* melting into thin air, pensively walked off to try fortune on a new beat.

Clara, now that the danger was over, began to tremble. Hitherto she had not quailed. Leaving the shop, she took the nearest way to the hotel. For the last twenty-four hours agitation and excitement had prevented her taking food. Wretchedly faint, she stopped and took hold of an iron lamp-post for support.

An officer in the Confederate uniform, seeing she was ill, said, "Mademoiselle, you need help. Allow me to escort you home."

Dreading lest she should fall, through feebleness, into worse hands, Clara thanked him and took his proffered arm. "To the St. Charles, sir, if you please."

"I myself stop at the St. Charles. Allow me to introduce myself: Robert Onslow, Captain in Company D, Wigman Regiment. May I ask whom I have the pleasure of assisting?"

"Miss Brown. I'm stopping a few days with my friend, Miss Tremaine."

"Indeed! I was to call on her this evening. We may renew our acquaintance."

"Perhaps."

Clara suddenly put down her veil. Approaching slowly like a fate, rolled on the splendid barouche of Mr. Ratcliff. He sat with arms folded and was smoking a cigar. Clara fancied she saw arrogance, hate, disappointment, rage, all written in his countenance. Without moving his arms, he bowed carelessly to Onslow.

"That's one of the prime managers of the secession movement."

"So I should think," said Clara; but Onslow detected nothing equivocal in the tone of the remark. Having escorted her to the door of Miss Tremaine's parlour, he bowed his farewell, and Clara went in. Laura had not yet returned.

CHAPTER XII.

DELIGHT AND DUTY.

According to our living here, we shall hereafter, by a hidden concatenation of causes, be drawn to a condition answerable to the purity or impurity of our souls in this life: that silent Nemesis that passes through the whole contexture of the universe, ever fatally contriving us into such a state as we ourselves have fitted ourselves for by our customary actions. Of so great consequence is it, while we have opportunity, to aspire to the best things.—*Henry More*, A. D. 1659.

It may seem strange that Onslow and Kenrick, differing so widely, should renew the friendship of their boyhood. We have seen that Onslow, allowing the æsthetic side of his nature to outgrow the moral, had departed from the teachings of his father on the subject of slavery. Kenrick, in whom the moral and devotional faculty asserted its supremacy over all inferior solicitings, also repudiated *his* paternal teachings; but they were directly contrary to those of his friend, and, in abandoning them, he gave up the prospect of a large inheritance.

To Onslow, these thick-lipped, woolly-headed negroes—what were they fit for but to be hewers of wood and drawers of water to the gentle and refined? It was monstrous to suppose that between such and him there could be equality of any kind. The ethnological argument was conclusive. Had not Professor Moleschott said that the brain of the negro contains less phosphorus than that of the white man? Proof sufficient that Cuffee was expressly created to pull off my boots and hoe in my cotton-fields, while I make it a penal offence to teach him to read!

Onslow, too, had been fortunate in his intercourse with slaveholders. Young, handsome, and accomplished, he had felt the charm of their affectionate hospitality. He had found taste, culture, and piety in their abodes; all the graces and all the amenities of life. What wonder that he should narcotize his moral sense with the aroma of these social fascinations! Even at the North, where the glamour they cast ought not to distort the sight, and where men ought healthfully to look the abstract abomination full in the face, and testify to its deformity—how many consciences were drugged, how many hearts shut to justice and to mercy!

With Kenrick, brought up on a plantation where slavery existed in its mildest form, meditation on God's law as written in the enlightened human conscience, completely reversed the views adopted from upholders of the institution. Thenceforth the elegances of his home became hateful. He felt like a robber in the midst of them.

The spectacle of some hideous, awkward, perhaps obscene and depraved black woman, hoeing in the corn-field, instead of awakening in his mind, as in Onslow's, the thought that she was in her proper place, did but move him to tears of bitter contrition and humiliation. How far there was sin or accountability on her part, or that of her progenitors, he could not say; but that there was deep, immeasurable sin on the part of those who, instead of helping that degraded nature to rise, made laws to crush it all the deeper in the mire, he could not fail to feel in anguish of spirit. Through all that there was in her of ugliness and depravity, making her less tolerable than the beast to his æsthetic sense, he could still detect those traits and possibilities that allied her with immortal natures, and in her he saw all her sex outraged, and universal womanhood nailed to the cross of Christ, and mocked by unbelievers!

The evening of the day of Clara's arrival at the St. Charles, Onslow and Kenrick met by agreement in the drawing-room of the Tremaines. Clara had told Laura, that, in going out to purchase a few hair pins, she had been taken suddenly faint, and that a gentleman, who proved to be Captain Onslow, had escorted her home.

"Could anything be more apt for my little plot!" said Laura. "But consider! Here it is eight o'clock, and you're not dressed! Do you know how long you've been sleeping? This will never do!"

A servant knocked at the door, with the information that two gentlemen were in the drawing-room.

"Dear me! I must go in at once," said Laura. "Now tell me you'll be quick and follow, Darling."

Clara gave the required pledge, and proceeded to arrange her hair. Laura looked on for a minute, envying her those thick brown tresses, and then darted into the next room where the visitors were waiting. Greeting them with her usual animation of manner, she asked Onslow for the news.

"The news is," said Onslow, "my friend Charles is undergoing conversion. We shall have him an

out-and-out Secessionist before the Fourth of July."

"On what do you base your calculations?" asked Kenrick.

"On the fact that for the last twelve hours I haven't heard you call down maledictions on the Confederate cause."

"Perhaps I conclude that the better part of valour is discretion."

"No, Charles, yours is not the Falstaffian style of courage."

"Well, construe my mood as you please. Miss Tremaine, your piano stands open. Does it mean we're to have music?"

"Yes. Hasn't the Captain told you of his meeting a young lady—Miss Perdita Brown?"

"I'll do him the justice to say he *did* tell me he had escorted such a one."

"What did he say of her?"

"Nothing, good or bad."

"But that's very suspicious."

"So it is."

"Pray who is Miss Perdita Brown?" asked Onslow.

"She's a daughter of—of—why, of Mr. Brown, of course. He lives in St. Louis."

"Is she a good Secessionist?"

"On the contrary, she's a desperate little Abolitionist."

"Look at Charles!" said Onslow. "He's enamoured already. I'm sorry she isn't secesh."

"Think of the triumph of converting her!" said Laura.

"That indeed! Of course," said Onslow, "like all true women, she'll take her politics from the man she loves."

And the Captain smoothed his moustache, and looked handsome as Phœbus Apollo.

"Oh, the conceit!" exclaimed Laura. "Look at him, Mr. Kenrick! Isn't he charming? Where's the woman who wouldn't turn Mormon, or even Yankee, for his sake? Surely one of us weak creatures could be content with one-tenth or even one-twentieth of the affections of so superb an Ali. Come, sir, promise me I shall be the fifteenth Mrs. Onslow when you emigrate to Utah."

Onslow was astounded at this fire of raillery. Could the lady have heard of any disparaging expression he had dropped?

"Spare me, Miss Laura," he said. "Don't deprive the Confederacy of my services by slaying me before I've smelt powder."

"Where's Miss Brown all this while?" asked Kenrick.

Laura went to the door, and called "Perdita!"

"In five minutes," was the reply.

Clara was dressing. When, that morning, she came in from her walk, she thought intently on her situation, and at last determined on a new line of policy. Instead of playing the humble companion and shy recluse, she would now put forth all her powers to dazzle and to strike. She would, if possible, make friends, who should protest against any arbitrary claim that Ratcliff might set up. She would vindicate her own right to freedom by showing she was not born to be a slave. All who had known her should feel their own honour wounded in any attempt to injure hers.

Having once fixed before herself an object, she grew calm and firm. When her dinner was sent up, she ate it with a good appetite. Sleep, too, that had been a stranger to her so many hours, now came to repair her strength, and revive her spirits.

No sooner had Laura left to attend to her visitors, than Clara plunged into the drawers containing the dresses for her choice. With the rapidity of instinct she selected the most becoming;

then swiftly and deftly, with the hand of an adept and the eye of an artist, she arranged her toilet. A dexterous adaptation of pins speedily rectified any little defect in the fit. Where were the collars? Locked up. No matter! There was a frill of exquisite lace round the neck of the dress; and this little narrow band of maroon velvet would serve to relieve the bareness of the throat. What could she clasp it with? Laura had not left the key of her jewel-box. A common pin would hardly answer. Suddenly Clara bethought herself of the little coral sleeve-button, wrapped up in the strip of bunting. That would serve admirably. Yes. Nothing could be better. It was her only article of jewellery; though round her right wrist she wore a hair-bracelet of her own braiding, made from that strand given her by Esha; and from a flower-vase she had taken a small cape-jasmine, white as alabaster, and fragrant as a garden of honeysuckles, and placed it in her hair. A fan? Yes, here is one.

And thus accoutred she entered the room where the three expectants were seated.

On seeing her, Laura's first emotion was one of admiration, as at sight of an imposing *entrée* at the opera. She was suddenly made aware of the

fact that Clara was the most beautiful young woman of her acquaintance; nay, not only the most beautiful, but the most stylish. So taken by surprise was she, so lost in looking, that it was nearly a third of a minute before she introduced the young gentlemen. Onslow claimed acquaintance, presented a chair, and took a seat at Clara's side. Kenrick stood mute, as if a paradisiac vision had dazed his senses. When he threw off his bewilderment, he quieted himself with the thought, "She can't be as beautiful as she looks—that's one comfort. A shrew, perhaps—or, what is worse, a coquette!"

"When were you last in St. Louis, Miss Brown?" asked Onslow.

"All questions for information must be addressed to Miss Tremaine," said Clara. "I shall be happy to talk with you on things I know nothing about. Shall we discuss the Dahlgren gun, or the Ericsson Monitor?"

"So! She sets up for an eccentric," thought Onslow. "Perhaps politics would suit you," he added aloud. "I hear you're an Abolitionist."

"Ask Miss Tremaine," said Clara.

"Oh, she has betrayed you already," replied Onslow.

"Then I've nothing to say. I'm in her hands."

"Is it possible," said Kenrick, who was irrepresible on the one theme nearest his heart, "is it possible Miss Brown can't see it—can't see the loveliness of that divine cosmos which we call slavery? Poor deluded Miss Brown! I know not what other men may think, but as for me, give me slavery or give me death! Do you object to woman-whipping, Mrs. Brown?"

"I confess I've my prejudices against it," replied Clara. "But these charges of woman-whipping, you know, are Abolition lies."

"Yes, so northern conservatives say; but we of the plantations know that nearly one-half the whippings are of women." *

* Among the foul records the Rebellion has unearthed is one, found at Alexandria, La., being a stray leaf from the diary of an overseer in that vicinity, in the year 1847. It chronicles the whippings of slaves from April 20 to May 21. Of thirty-nine whippings during that period, *nineteen were of females*. We give a few extracts from this precious and authentic document:—

"April 20. Whipped Adam for cutting cotton too wide. Nat, for thinning cotton.—21. Adaline and Clem, for being behind.—24. Esther, for leaving child out in yard to let it cry.—27. Adaline, for being slow getting out of quarters.—28. Daniel, for not having cobs taken out of horse-trough.—May 1. Anna, Jo, Hannah, Sarah, Jim, and Jane, for not thinning corn right. Clem, for being too long thinning one row of corn. Esther, for not being out of quarters quick enough.—10. Adaline, for being last one out with row.—15. Esther, for leaving grass in cotton.—17. Peggy,

"Come! Sink the shop!" cried Laura. "Are we so dull we can't find anything but our horrible *bête noir* for our amusement? Let us have scandal rather; nonsense rather! Tell us a story, Mr. Kenrick."

"Well; once on a time—how would you like a ghost story?"

"Above all things. Charming! Only ghosts have grown so common, they no longer thrill us."

"Yes," said Kenrick—whose trivial thoughts ever seemed to call up his serious—"yes; materialism has done a good work in its day and generation. It has taught us that the business of this world must go on just as if there were no ghosts. The supernatural is no longer an incubus and an oppression. Its phenomena no longer frighten and paralyse. Let us, then, since we are now freed from their terrors, welcome the great facts themselves as illumining and confirming all that there is in the past to comfort us with the assurance of continuous life issuing from seeming death."

for not hoeing as much cane as she ought to last week.—18. Polly, for not hoeing faster.—20. Martha, Esther, and Sarah, for jawing about row, while I was gone.—21. Polly, for not handling her hoe faster."

A United States officer from Cambridge, Mass., sent home this stray leaf, and it was originally published in the Cambridge Chronicle.

"Dear Mr. Kenrick, is this a time for a lecture?" expostulated Laura. "Aren't you bored, Perdita?"

"On the contrary, I'm interested."

"What do you think of spiritualism, Miss Brown?"

"I've witnessed none of the phenomena, but I don't see why the testimony of these times, in regard to them, shouldn't be taken as readily as that of centuries back."

"My father is a believer," said Onslow; "and I have certainly seen some unaccountable things—tables lifted into the air—instruments of music floated about, and played on without visible touch—human hands, palpable and warm, coming out from impalpable air:—all very queer and very inexplicable! But what do they prove? *Cui bono*? What of it all?"

"‘Nothing in it!’ as Sir Charles Coldstream says of the Vatican," interposed Laura.

"You demand the use of it all—the *cui bono*—do you?" retorted Kenrick. "Did it ever occur to you to make your own existence the subject of that terrible inquiry, *cui bono*?"

"Certainly," replied Onslow, laughing; "my

cui bono is to fight for the independence of the new Confederacy.”

“And for the propagation of slavery, eh?” returned Kenrick. “I don’t see the *cui bono*. On the contrary, to my fallible vision, the world would be better off without than with you. But let us take a more extreme case. These youths—Tom, Dick, and Harry—who give their days and nights, not to the works of Addison, but to gambling, julep-drinking, and cigar-smoking—who hate and shun all useful work—and are no comfort to anybody—only a shame and affliction to somebody—can you explain to me the *cui bono* of their corrupt and unprofitable lives?”

“But how undignified in a spirit to push tables about and play on accordions!”

“Well, what authority have you for the supposition that there are no undignified spirits? We know there are weak and wicked spirits *in* the flesh; why not *out* of the flesh? A spirit, or an intelligence claiming to be one, writes an ungrammatical sentence or a pompous commonplace, and signs *Bacon* to it; and you forthwith exclaim, ‘Pooh! this can’t come from a spirit.’ How do you know that? Mayn’t lies be told in other worlds than this? Will the ignoramus at once be

made a scholar—the dullard a philosopher—the blackguard a gentleman—the sinner a saint—the liar truthful—by the simple process of elimination from this husk of flesh? Make me at once altogether other than what I am, and you annihilate me, and there is no immortality of the soul.”

“But what has the ghost contributed to our knowledge during these fourteen years, since he appeared at Rochester? Of all he has brought us, we may say, with Shakespeare, ‘There needs no ghost come from the grave to tell us that.’”

“I’ll tell you what the ghost has contributed, not at Rochester merely, but everywhere, through the ages. He has contributed *himself*. You say, *cui bono*? And I might say of ten thousand mysteries about us, *cui bono*? The lightning strikes the church-steeple—*cui bono*? An idiot is born into the world—*cui bono*? It is absurd to demand as a condition of rational faith, that we should prove a *cui bono*? A good or a use may exist, and we be unable to see it. And yet grave men are continually thrusting into the faces of the investigators of these phenomena this preposterous *cui bono*?

“Enough, my dear Mr. Kenrick?” exclaimed Laura.

But he was not to be stopped. He rose and paced the room, and continued: "The *cui bono* of phenomena must of course be found in the mind that regards them. 'I can't find you both arguments and brains,' said Dr. Johnson to a noodle who thought Milton trashy. One man sees an apple fall, and straightway thinks of the price of cider. Newton sees it, and it suggests gravitation. One man sees a table rise in the air, and cries: 'It can't be a spirit; 'tis too undignified for a spirit!' Mountford sees it, and the immortality of the soul is thenceforth to him a fact as positive as any fact of science."

"Your story, dear Mr. Kenrick, your story!" urged Laura.

"My story is ended. The ghost has come and vanished."

"Is that all?" whined Laura. "Aren't we, then, to have a story?"

"In mercy give us some music, Miss Brown," said Onslow.

"Play Yankee Doodle, with variations," interposed Kenrick.

"Not unless you'd have the windows smashed in," pleaded Onslow; and, giving his arm, he conducted Clara to the piano.

"She dashed into a medley of brilliant airs from operas, uniting them by extemporized links of melody to break the abruptness of the transitions. The young men were both connoisseurs; and they interchanged looks of gratified astonishment.

"And now for a song!" exclaimed Laura.

Clara paused a moment, and sat looking with clasped hands at the keys. Then, after a delicate prelude, she gave that song of Pestal, already quoted.* She gave it with her whole soul, as if a personal wrong were adding intensity to the defiance of her tones.

Kenrick, wrought to a state of sympathy which he could not disguise, had taken a seat where he could watch her features while she sang. When she had finished, she covered her face with her hands, then, finding her emotion uncontrollable, rose and left the room.

"What do you think of that, Charles?" asked Onslow.

"It was terrible," said Kenrick. "I wanted to kill a slaveholder while she sang."

"But she has the powers of a *prima donna*," said Onslow, turning to Laura.

* See vol. i. chap. xii. p. 208.

"Yes, one would think she had practised for the stage."

Clara now returned with a countenance placid and smiling.

"How long do you stay in New Orleans, Miss Brown?" inquired Onslow.

"How long, Laura?" asked Clara.

"A week or two."

"We shall have another opportunity, I hope, of hearing you sing."

"I hope so."

"I have an appointment now at the armoury. Charles, are you ready to walk?"

"No, thank you. I prefer to remain."

Onslow left, and, immediately afterwards, Laura's mother being taken worse, she was called out of the room to attend upon her. Kenrick was alone with Clara. Charming opportunity! He drew from her still another and another song. He conversed with her on her studies—on the books she had read—the pictures she had seen. He was roused by her intelligence and wit. He spoke of slavery. Deep as was his own detestation of it, she helped him to make it deeper. What delightful harmony of views! Kenrick felt that his time had come. The hours slipped by

like minutes, yet there he sat chained by a fascination so new, so strange, so delightful, he marvelled that life had in it so much of untasted joy.

Kenrick was not accustomed to be critical in details. He looked at general effects. But the most trifling point in Clara's attire was now a thing to be marked and remembered. The little sleeve-button dropped from the band round her throat. Kenrick pick it up—examined it—saw, in characters so fine as to be hardly legible, the letters C. A. B. upon it. ("B. stands for Brown," thought he.) And then, as Clara put out her hand to receive it, he noticed the bracelet she wore. "What beautiful hair!" he said. He looked up at Clara's to trace a resemblance. But his glance stopped midway at her eyes. "Blue and grey!" he murmured.

"Yes, can you read them?" asked Clara.

"What do you mean?"

"Only a dream I had. There's a letter on them somebody is to open and read."

"Oh, that I were a Daniel to interpret!" said Kenrick.

At last Miss Tremaine returned. Her mother had been dangerously ill. It was an hour after midnight. Sincerely astounded at finding it so

late, Kenrick took his leave. Heart and brain were full. "Thou art the wine whose drunkenness is all I can desire, O love!"

And how was it with Clara? Alas, the contrariety of the affections! Clara simply thought Kenrick a very agreeable young man: handsome, but not so handsome as Onslow; clever, but not so clever as Vance!

CHAPTER XIII.

A LETTER OF BUSINESS.

This war's duration can be more surely calculated from the moral progress of the North than from the result of campaigns in the field. Were the whole North to-day as one man on the moral issues underlying the struggle, the Rebellion were this day crushed. God bids us, I think, *be just and let the oppressed go free*. Let us do his bidding, and the plagues cease.—*Letter from a native of Richmond, Va.*

THE following letter belongs chronologically to this stage in our history :—

*From F. Macon Semmes, New York, to T. J.
Semmes, New Orleans.*

“DEAR BROTHER—I have called, as you requested, on Mr. Charlton in regard to his real estate in New Orleans. Let me give you some account of this man. He is taxed for upwards of a million. He inherited a good part of this sum from his wife, and she inherited it from a nephew, the late Mr. Berwick, who inherited it from his infant daughter, and this last from her mother.

Mother, child, and father—the whole Berwick family—were killed by a steamboat explosion on the Mississippi some fifteen or sixteen years ago.

“In the lawsuit which grew out of the conflicting claims of the relatives of the mother on the one side, and of the father on the other, it was made to appear that the mother must have been killed instantaneously, either by the inhalation of steam from the explosion, or by a blow on the head from a splinter; either cause being sufficient to produce immediate death. It was then proved that the child, having been seen with her nurse alive and struggling in the water, must have lived after the mother—thus inheriting the mother’s property. But it was further proved that the child was drowned, and that the father survived the child a few hours; and thus the father’s heir became entitled to an estate amounting to upwards of a million of dollars, all of which was thus diverted from the Aylesford family (to whom the property ought to have gone), and bestowed on a man alien in blood and in every other respect to all the parties fairly interested.

“This fortunate man was Charlton. The scandal goes, that even the wife from whom he derived the estate (and who died before he got it) had re-

ceived from him such treatment as to alienate her wholly. The nearest relative of Mrs. Berwick, *née* Aylesford, is a Mrs. Pompilard, now living with an aged husband and with dependent step-children and grandchildren, in a state of great impoverishment. To this aunt the large property derived from her brother, Mr. Aylesford, ought to have gone. But the law gave it to a stranger, this Charlton. I mention these facts, because you ask me to inform you what manner of man he is.

“Let one little anecdote illustrate. Mr. Albert Pompilard, now some eighty years old, has been in his day a great operator in Wall Street. He has made half a dozen large fortunes and lost them. Five years ago, by a series of bold and fortunate speculations, he placed himself once more on the top round of the financial ladder. He paid off all his debts with interest, pensioned off a widowed daughter, lifted up from the gutter several old, broken-down friends, and advanced a handsome sum to his literary son-in-law, Mr. Cecil Purling, who had found, as he thought, a short cut to fortune. Pompilard also bought a stylish place on the Hudson; and people supposed he would be content to keep aloof from the stormy fluctuations of Wall Street.

“But one day he read in the financial column of the newspaper certain facts that roused the old propensity. His near neighbour was a rich retired tailor, a Mr. Maloney, an Irishman, who used to come over to play billiards with the venerable stock-jobber. Pompilard had made a visit to Wall Street the day before. He had been fired with a grand scheme of buying up the whole of a certain stock (in which sellers at sixty days at a low figure were abundant) and then holding on for a grand rise. He did not find it difficult to kindle the financial enthusiasm of poor Snip.

“Brief, the two simpletons went into the speculation, and lost every cent they were worth in the world. Simultaneously with their break-down, Purling, the son-in-law, managed to lose all that had been confided to his hands. The widowed daughter, Mrs. Ireton, gave up all the little estate her father had settled on her. Poor Maloney had to go back to his goose; and Pompilard, now almost an octogenarian, has been obliged, he and his family, to take lodgings in the cottage of his late gardener.

“The other day Mr. Hicks, a friend of the family, learning that they were actually pinched in their resources, ventured to call upon Charlton

for a contribution for their relief. After an evident inward struggle, Charlton manfully pulled out his pocket-book, and tendered—what, think you?—why, a ten-dollar bill! Hicks affected to regard the tender as an insult, and slapped the donor's face. Charlton at first threatened a prosecution, but concluded it was too expensive a luxury. Thus you see he is a miser. It was with no little satisfaction, therefore, that I called to communicate the state of his affairs in New Orleans.

“He lives on one of the avenues in a neat free-stone house, such as could be hired for twenty-five hundred a year. There is a stable attached, and he keeps a carriage. Soon after he burst upon the fashionable world as a millionaire, there was a general competition among fashionable families to secure him for one of the daughters. But Charlton, with all his wealth, did not want a wife who was merely stylish, clever, and beautiful; she must be rich into the bargain. He at last encountered such a one (as he imagined) in Miss Dykvelt, a member of one of the old Dutch families. He proposed, was accepted, married—and three weeks afterwards, to his consternation and horror, he received an application from old D., the father-in-law, for a loan of a hundred thousand dollars.

“Charlton, of course, indignantly refused it. He found that he had been, to use his own words, ‘taken in and done for.’ Old Dykvelt, while he kept up the style of a prince, was on the verge of bankruptcy. The persons to whom Charlton applied for information, knowing the object of the inquiry and the meanness of the inquirer, purposely cajoled him with stories of Dykvelt’s wealth. Charlton fell into the trap. Charlotte Dykvelt, who was in love at the time with young Ireton (a Lieutenant in the army and a grandson of old Pompilard), yielded to the entreaties of her parents and married the man she detested. She was well versed in the history of his first wife, and resolved that her own heart, wrung by obedience to parental authority, should be iron and adamant to any attempt Charlton might make to wound it.

“He soon found himself overmatched. The bully and tyrant was helpless before the impassive frigidity and inexorable determination of that young and beautiful woman. He had a large iron safe in his house, in which he kept his securities and coupons, and often large sums of money. One day he discovered he had been robbed of thirty thousand dollars. He charged the theft upon his wife. She neither denied nor confessed it, but

treated him with a glacial scorn before which he finally cowered and was dumb. Undoubtedly she had taken the money. She forced him against his inclination to move into a decent house, and keep a carriage; and at last, by a threat of leaving him, she made him settle on her a liberal allowance.

“A loveless home for him, as you may suppose! One daughter, Lucy Charlton, is the offspring of this ill-assorted marriage; a beautiful girl, I am told, but who shrinks from her father’s presence as from something odious. Probably the mother’s impressions gave direction to the antipathies of the child; so that before it came into the world it was fatherless.

“Well, I called on Charlton last Thursday. As I passed the little sitting-room of the basement, I saw a young and lovely girl putting her mouth to the bars of a cage, and a canary-bird picking the food from her lips. A cat, who seemed to be on excellent terms with the bird, was perched on the girl’s shoulder, and superintending the operation. So, thought I, she exercises her affections in the society of these dumb pets rather than in that of her father.

“I found Charlton sitting lonely in a sort of

library scantily furnished with books. A well-formed man, but with a face haggard and anxious as if his life-blood were ebbing irrecoverably with every penny that went from his pockets. On my mentioning your name, his eyes brightened; for he inferred I had come with your semiannual remittances. He was at once anxious to know if rents in New Orleans had been materially affected by the war. I told him his five houses near Lafayette Square, excepting that occupied on a long lease by Mr. Carberry Ratcliff, would not bring in half the amount they did last year. He groaned audibly. I then told him that your semiannual collections for him amounted to six thousand dollars, but that you were under the painful necessity of assuring him that the money would have to be paid all over to the Confederate government.

“Charlton, completely struck aghast, fell back in his chair, his face pale, and his lips quivering. I thought he had fainted.

“‘Your brother wouldn’t rob me, Mr. Semmes?’ he gasped forth.

“‘Certainly not,’ I replied; ‘but his obedience is due to the authorities that are uppermost. The Confederate flag waves over New Orleans, and will

probably continue to wave. All your real estate has been or will be confiscated.'

"'But it is worth two hundred thousand dollars!'" he exclaimed, in a tone that was almost a shriek.

"'So much the better for the Confederate treasury!'" I replied.

"I then broached what you told me to in regard to his making a *bonâ fide* sale of the property to you. I offered him twenty thousand dollars in cash, if he would surrender all claim.

"'Never! never!'" he exclaimed. 'I'll run my risk of the city's coming back into our possession. I see through your brother's trick.'

"'Please recall that word, sir,' I said, touching my wristbands.

"'Well, your brother's *plan*, sir. Will that suit you?'

"'That will do,' I replied. 'My brother will pay your ten thousand dollars over to the Confederacy. But I am authorized to pay you a tenth part of that sum for your receipt in full of all moneys due to you for rents up to this time.'

"'Ha! you Secessionists are not quite so positive, after all, as to your fortune!'" he exclaimed. 'You're a little weak-kneed as to your ability to hold the place—eh?'

“‘The city will be burnt,’ I replied, ‘before the inhabitants will consent to have the old flag restored. You’d better make the most, Mr. Charlton, of your opportunity to compound for a fractional part of the value of your Southern property.’

“It was all in vain. I couldn’t make him see it. He hates the war, and the Lincoln administration; but he won’t sell or compound on the terms you propose. And, to be frank, I wouldn’t if I were he. It would be a capital thing for us if he could be made to do it. But as he is in no immediate need of money, we cannot rely on the stimulus of absolute want to influence him as we wish. I took my leave, quite disgusted with his obstinacy.

“The fall of Sumter seems to have fired the Northern heart in earnest. I fear we are going to have serious work with these Yankees. Secretary Walker’s cheerful promise of raising the Confederate flag over Faneuil Hall will not be realized for some time. Nevertheless, we are bound to prevail—I hope. Of course every Southern man will die in the last ditch rather than yield one foot of Southern soil to Yankee domination. We must have Maryland and the Chesapeake, Fortress Monroe, and all the Gulf forts, Western Virginia,

Missouri, Kentucky, Delaware—every square inch of them. Not a rood must we part with. We can whip, if we'll only think so. We're the master race, and can do it. Can hold on to our niggers into the bargain. At least, we'll talk as if we believed it. Perhaps the prediction will work its fulfilment. Who knows?

“Fraternally yours,

“F. M. S.”

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WOMAN WHO DELIBERATES IS LOST.

O North-wind! blow strong with God's breath in twenty million men.—*Rev. John Weiss.*

Loud wind, strong wind, sweeping o'er the mountains,
 Fresh wind, free wind, blowing from the sea,
 Pour forth thy vials like streams from airy fountains,
 Draughts of life to me.

Miss Muloch.

ON coming down to the breakfast-table one morning, Kenrick was delighted to encounter Vance, and asked, "What success?"

"I found in Natchez," was the reply, "an old coloured man who knew Davy and his wife. They removed to New York, it seems, some three years ago. I must push my inquiries further. The clue must not be dropped. The old man, my informant, was formerly a slave. He came into my room at the hotel, and showed me the scars on his back. Ah! I, too, could have showed scars, if I had deemed it prudent."

"Cousin William," said Kenrick, "I wouldn't take the testimony of our humane overseer as to slavery. I have studied the usages on other plantations. Let me show you a photograph which I look at when my anti-slavery rage wants kindling, which is not often."

He produced the photograph of a young female, apparently a quarteroon, sitting with back exposed naked to the hips—her face so turned as to show an intelligent and rather handsome profile. The flesh was all welted, seamed, furrowed, and scarred, as if both by fire and the scourge.

"There!" resumed Kenrick, "that I saw taken myself, and know it to be genuine. It is one out of many I have collected. The photograph cannot lie. It will be terrible as the recording angel in reflecting slavery as this civil war will unearth it. What will the Carlyles and the Gladstones say to this? Will it make them falter, think you, in their Sadducean hoot against a noble people who are manfully fighting the great battle of humanity against such infernalism as this?"

"They would probably fall back on the doubter's privilege."

"Yes, that's the most decent way of escape. But I would pin them with the sharp fact. That

woman (her name was Margaret) belonged to the Widow Gillespie,* on the Black River. Margaret had a nursing child, and, out of maternal tenderness, had disobeyed Mrs. Gillespie's orders to wean it. For this she was subjected to *the punishment of the hand-saw*. She was laid on her face, her back was laid bare, her hands and feet held down, and Mrs. Gillespie, sitting by, then 'paddled' or stippled the exposed body with the hand-saw. She then had Margaret turned over, and, with heated tongs, attempted to grasp her nipples. The writhings of the victim foiled her purpose; but between the breasts the skin and flesh were horribly burned."

"A favourite remark," said Vance, "with our smug apologists of slavery, is, that an owner's interests will make him treat a slave well. Undoubtedly in many cases so it is. But I have generally found that human malignity, anger, or revenge, is more than a match for human avarice. A man will often gratify his spite even at the expense of his pocket."

Kenrick showed the photograph of a man with his back scarred as if by a shower of fire.

* The names and the facts are real. See *Harper's Weekly*, July 4, 1863.

"This poor fellow," said Kenrick, "shows the effects of the *corn-husk punishment*; not an unusual one on some plantations. The victim is stretched out on the ground, with hands and feet held down. Dry corn-husks are then lighted, and the burning embers are whipped off with a stick so as to fall in showers of live sparks on the naked back. Such is the 'patriarchal' system! Such the tender mercies bestowed on 'our man-servants and our maid-servants,' as that artful dodger, Jeff Davis, calls our plantation slaves."

"And yet," remarked Vance, "horrible as these things are, how small a part of the wrong of slavery is in the mere *physical* suffering inflicted!"

"Yes, the crowning outrage is mental and moral."

"This war," resumed Vance, "is not sectional, nor geographical, nor, in a party sense, political: it is a war of eternally antagonistic principles—Belial against Gabriel."

"I took up a Northern paper to-day," said Kenrick, "in which the writer pleads the necessity of slavery, because, he says, 'white men can't work in the rice-swamps.' Truly, a staggering argument! The whole rice production of the

United States is only worth some four millions of dollars per annum! A single factory in Lowell can beat that. And we are asked to base a national policy on such considerations!"

Here the approach of guests led to a change of topic.

"And how have *your* affairs prospered?" asked Vance.

"Ah! cousin," replied Kenrick, "I almost blush to tell you what an experience I've had."

"Not fallen in love, I hope?"

"If it isn't that, 'tis something very near it. The lady is staying with Miss Tremaine. A Miss Perdita Brown. Onslow took me to see her."

"And which is the favoured admirer?"

"Onslow, I fear. I'm not a lady's man, you see. Indeed, I never wished to be till now. Give me a few lessons, cousin. Teach me a little small-talk."

"I must know something of the lady first."

"To begin at the beginning," said Kenrick, "there can be no dispute as to her beauty. But there is a something in her manner that puzzles me. Is it lack of sincerity? Not that. Is it pre-occupation of thought? Sometimes it seems that. And then some apt, flashing remark indicates that

she has her wits on the alert. You must see her and help me read her. You visit Miss Laura?"

"Yes. I'll do your bidding, Charles. How often have you seen this enchantress?"

"Too often for my peace of mind: three times."

"Is she a coquette?"

"If one, she has the art to conceal art. There seems to be something on her mind more absorbing than the desire to fascinate. She's an unconscious beauty."

"Say a deep one. Shall we meet at Miss Tremaine's to-night?"

"Yes; the moth knows he'll get singed, but flutter he must."

"Take comfort, Charles, in that of thought of Tennyson's, who tells us

That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire."

The cousins parted. They had no sooner quitted the breakfast-room than Onslow entered. After a hasty meal, he took his sword-belt and military-cap, and walked forth out of the hotel. As he passed Wakeman's shop, near by, for the sale of books and periodicals, he was attracted by a photograph in a small walnut frame in the

window. Stopping to examine it, he uttered an exclamation of surprise, stepped into the shop, and said to Wakeman, "Where did you get that photograph?"

"That was sent here with several others by the photographer. You'll find his name on the back."

"I see. What shall I pay you for it?"

"A dollar."

"There it is."

Onslow took the picture and left the shop, but did not notice that he was followed by a well-dressed gentleman with a cigar in his mouth. This individual had been for several days watching every passer by who looked at that photograph. He now followed Onslow to the headquarters of his regiment; put an inquiry to one of the members of the Captain's company, and then strolled away as if he had more leisure than he knew what to do with. But no sooner had he turned a corner, than he entered a carriage which was driven off at great speed.

Not an hour had passed when a black man in livery put into Onslow's hands this note:—

"Will you come and dine with me at five to-day without ceremony? Please reply by the bearer.

"Yours,

C. RATCLIFF."

What can he want? thought Onslow, somewhat gratified by such an attention from so important a leader. Presuming that the object merely was to ask some questions concerning military matters, the Captain turned to the man in livery, and said, "Tell Mr. Ratcliff I will come."

Punctually at the hour of five Onslow ascended the marble steps of Ratcliff's stately house, rang the bell, and was ushered into a large and elegantly furnished drawing-room, the windows of which were heavily curtained so as to keep out the glare of the too fervid sunlight. Pictures and statues were disposed about the apartment, but Onslow, who had a genuine taste for art, could find nothing that he would covet for a private gallery of his own.

Ratcliff entered, habited in a cool suit of grass-cloth. The light hues of his vest and neck-tie heightened the contrast of his somewhat florid complexion, which had now lost all the smoothness of youth. Self-indulgent habits had faithfully done their work in moulding his exterior. Portly and puffy, he looked much older than he really was. But in his manner of greeting Onslow there was much of that charm which renders the hospitality of a plantation lord so attractive. Throwing aside

all that arrogance which would have made his overseers and tradespeople keep their distance, he welcomed Onslow like an old friend and an equal.

"You've a superb house here," said the ingenuous Captain.

"'Twill do, considering that I sometimes occupy it only a month in the year," replied Ratcliff. "I'm glad to say I only hire it. The house belonged to a Miss Aylesford, a Yankee heiress; then passed into the possession of a New York man, one Charlton; but I pay the rent into the coffers of the Confederate government. The property is confiscate."

"Won't the Yankees retaliate?"

"We shan't allow them to."

"After we've whipped Yankee-Doo-dle-dom, what then?"

"Then a strong military government. Having our slaves to work for us, we shall become the greatest martial nation in the world. Our poor whites, now a weakness and a burden, we will convert into soldiers and Cossacks; excepting the artisan and trading classes, and them we must disfranchise." *

* Mr. W. S. Grayson of Mississippi writes, in *De Bow's Review* (August, 1860): "Civil liberty has been the theme of praise

"Can we expect aid from England?" asked Onslow.

"Not open aid, but substantial aid nevertheless. Exeter Hall may grumble. The *doctrinaires*, the Newmans, Brights, Mills, and Cobdens may protest and agitate. The English clodhoppers, mudsills, and workies of all kinds will sympathize of course with the low-born Yankees. But the master race of England, the non-producers, will favour the same class here. The disintegration of North America into warring States is what they long to see. Already the English government is swift to hail us as belligerents. Already it refuses what it once so eagerly proffered—an international treaty making privateering piracy. Soon it will let us fit out privateers in English ports. Yes, England is all right."

Here a slave-boy announced dinner, and they entered a smaller but lofty apartment, looking out on a garden, and having its two open windows pleasantly latticed with grape-vines. A handsome, richly-dressed quadroon lady sat at the table. In

among men, and most wrongfully. This is the infatuation of our age." And Mr. George Fitzhugh of Virginia writes: "Men are never efficient in military matters, or in industrial pursuits, until wholly deprived of their liberty. *Loss of liberty is no disgrace.*"

introducing his young guest, Ratcliff addressed her as Madame Volney.

Onslow, in his innocence, inquired after Mrs. Ratcliff.

"My wife is an invalid, and rarely quits her room," said the host.

The dinner was sumptuous, beginning with turtle-soup and ending with ices and fruits. The costliest Burgundies and Champagnes were uncorked, if only for a sip of their flavours. Madame Volney, half French, was gracious and talkative, occasionally checking Ratcliff in his eating, and warning him to be prudent. At last cigars were brought on, and she left the room. Ratcliff rose and listened at the door, as if to be sure she had gone upstairs. Then, walking on tiptoe, he resumed his seat. He alluded to the opera—to the ballet—to the subject of pretty women.

"And *apropos* of pretty women," he exclaimed, "let me show you a photograph of one I have in my pocket."

As he spoke there was a rustling in the grapevines at a window. He turned, but saw nothing.

Onslow took the photograph, and exclaimed: "But this is astonishing! I've a copy of the same in my pocket."

"You surprise me, Captain. Do you know the original?"

"Quite well; and I grant you she's beautiful."

Onslow did not notice the expression of Ratcliff's face at this confession, but another did. Lifting a glass of Burgundy so as to help his affectation of indifference, "Confess now, Captain," said Ratcliff, "that you're a favourite! That delicate mouth has been pressed by your lips; those ivory shoulders have known your touch."

"Oh never! never!" returned Onslow, with the emphasis of sincerity in his tone. "You misjudge the character of the lady. She's a friend of Miss Tremaine—is now passing a few days with her at the St. Charles. A lady wholly respectable. Miss Perdita Brown of St. Louis! That rascally photographer ought to be whipped for making money out of her beautiful picture."

"Has she admirers in her train?" asked Ratcliff.

"I know of but one beside myself."

"Indeed! And who is he?"

"Charles Kenrick has called on her with me."

"By the way, Wigman tells me that Charles insulted the flag the other day."

"Poh! Wigman was so drunk he couldn't distinguish jest from earnest."

"So Robson told me. But touching this Miss Brown—is she as pretty as her photograph would declare?"

"It hardly does her justice. But her sweet face is the least of her charms. She talks well—sings well—plays well—and, young as she is, has the bearing, the dignity, the grace, of the consummate lady."

Here there was another rustling, as if the grape-vine were pulled. Ratcliff started, went to the window, looked out, but, seeing nothing, remarked, "The wind must be rising," and returned to his seat. "I've omitted," said he, "to ask after your family; are they well?"

"Yes; they were in Austin when I heard from them last. My father, I grieve to say, goes with Hamilton and his set in opposition to the Southern movement. My brother, William Temple, is equally infatuated. My mother and sister of course acquiesce. So I'm the only faithful one of my family."

"You deserve a colonelcy for that."

"Thank you. Is your clock right?"

"Yes."

"Then I must go. I've an engagement."

"Sorry for it. Beware of Miss Brown. This is the day of Mars, not Venus. Good by."

When Onslow had gone, Ratcliff sat five minutes as if meditating on some plan. Then, drawing forth a pocket-book, he took out an envelope—wrote on it—reflected—and wrote again. When he had finished, he ordered the carriage to be brought to the door. As he was passing through the hall, Madame Volney, from the stairs, asked where he was going.

"To the St. Charles, on political business."

"Don't be out late, dear," said Madame. "Let me see how you look. Your necktie is out of place. Let me fix it. There! And your vest needs buttoning. So!" And as her delicate hands passed around his person, they slid unperceived into a side-pocket of his coat, and drew forth what he had just deposited there.

"Bother! That will do, Josephine," grumbled Ratcliff. She released him with a kiss. He descended the marble steps of the house, entered a carriage, and drove off.

Madame passed into the dining-room, the brilliant gas-lights of which had not yet been lowered, and, opening the pocket-book, drew out several photographic cards, all containing one and the

same likeness of a young and beautiful girl. As the quadroon scanned that fresh vernal countenance, that innocent, but earnest and intelligent expression, those thick, wavy tresses, and that exquisitely moulded bust, her own handsome face grew grim and ugly by the transmuting power of anger and jealousy. "So, this is the game he's pursuing, is it?" she muttered. "This is what makes him restive! Not politics, as he pretends, but this smoothed-face decoy! Deep as you've kept it, Ratcliff, I've fathomed you at last!"

Searching further among his papers, she found an envelope, on which certain memoranda were pencilled, and among them these: "*First see Tremaine. Arrange for seizure without scandal or noise. Early in the morning call on Gentry—have her prepared. Take Esha with us to help.*"

Hardly had Madame time to read this, when a carriage stopped before the door. Laying the pocket-book with its contents, as if undisturbed, on the table, she ran half-way upstairs. Ratcliff re-entered, and, after looking about the hall, passed into the dining-room. "Ah! here it is!" she heard him say to the attendant; "I could

have sworn I put it in my pocket." He then left the house, and the carriage again drove off—drove to the St. Charles, where Ratcliff had a long private interview with the pliable Tremaine.

While it was going on, Laura and Clara sat in the drawing-room, waiting for company. Laura having disapproved of the costume in which Clara had first appeared, the latter now wore a plain robe of black silk; and around her beautiful neck Laura had put a collar, large enough to be called a cape, fastening it in front with an old-fashioned cameo pin. But how provoking! This dress would insist on being more becoming even than the other!

Vance was the earliest of the visitors. On being introduced to Clara, he bowed as if they had never met before. Then, seating himself by Laura, he devoted himself assiduously to her entertainment. Clara turned over the leaves of a music-book, and took no part in the conversation. Yes! It was plain that Vance was deeply interested in the superficial, but showy Laura. Well, what better could be expected of a man?

Once more was Laura summoned to the bedside of her mother. "How vexatious!" Regretfully she left the drawing-room. As soon as she

had gone, Vance rose, and, taking a seat by Clara, offered her his hand. She returned its cordial pressure. "My dear young friend," he said, "tell me everything. What can I do for you?"

O, that she might fling herself on that strong arm and tender heart! That she might disclose to him her whole situation! The impulse of her heart urged her to do this. Then there was a struggle as if to keep down the ready confession. Pride battled with the feminine instinct that claimed a protector.

What! This man, on whom she had no more claim than on the veriest stranger—should she put upon him the burden of her confidence? This man who in one minute had whispered more flattering things in the ear of Laura than he had said to Clara during the whole of their acquaintance—should she ask favours from *him*? O, if he would, by look or word, but betray that he felt an interest in her beyond that of mere friendship! But then came the frightful thought, "I am a slave!" And Clara shuddered to think that no honourable attachment between her and a gentleman could exist.

"What of that? Surely I may claim from him the help which any true man ought to lend to a

woman threatened with outrage. Stop there! Does not the chivalry of the plantation reverse the notions of the old knight-errants, and give heed to no damsel in distress, unless she can show free papers? Nay, will not the representative of the blood of all the cavaliers look calmly on, and smoke his cigar, while a woman is bound naked to a tree and scourged?"

And then her mind ran rapidly over certain stories which a slave-girl, once temporarily hired by Mrs. Gentry, had told of the punishments of female slaves: how, for claiming too long a respite from work after childbirth, they had been "fastened up by their wrists to a beam, or to a branch of a tree, their feet barely touching the ground," and in that position horribly scourged with a leather thong; perhaps, the father, brother, or husband of the victim being compelled to officiate as the scourger! *

"But surely this man, whose very glance seems shelter and protection—this true and generous *gentleman*—must belong to a very different order of chivalry from that of the Davises, the Lees, and the Toombses. Yes! I'll stake my life he's

* Testimony of Mrs. Fanny Kemble to facts within her knowledge.

another kind of cavalier from those foul, obscene, and dastardly woman-whipping miscreants and scoundrels. Yes! I'll comply with that gracious entreaty of his, 'Tell me everything!' I'll confess all."

Her heart throbbed. She was on the point of uttering that one name, *Ratcliff*—a sound that would have inspired Vance with the power and wisdom of an archangel to rescue her—when there were voices at the door, and Laura entered, followed by Onslow. They brought with them a noise of talking and laughing. Soon Kenrick joined the party.

The golden opportunity seemed to have slipped by!

To Kenrick's gaze Clara never appeared so transcendent. But there was an unwonted paleness on her cheeks; and what meant that thoughtful and serious air? For a sensitive moral barometer commend us to a lover's heart!

Of course there was music; and Clara sang.

"What do you think of her voice?" asked Laura of Vance.

"It justifies all your praises," was the reply; and then, seeing that Clara was not in the mood for display, he took her place at the piano, and

rattled away just as Laura requested. Onslow tried to engage Clara in conversation; but a cloud, as if from some impending ill, was palpably over her.

Kenrick sat by in silence, deaf to the brilliant music. Clara's presence, with its subtle magnetism, had steeped his own thoughts in the prevailing hue of hers. Suddenly he turned to her, and whispered: "You want help. What is it? Grant me the privilege of a brother. What can I do for you?"

The glance Clara turned upon him was so full of thanks, so radiant with gratitude, that hope sprang in his heart. But before she could put her reply in words, Laura had come up, and taken her away to the piano for a concluding song. Clara gave them Longfellow's "Rainy Day" to Dempster's music.

The little gilt clock over the mantle tinkled eleven.

Vance rose to go, and said to Laura, "May I call on Miss Brown to-morrow with some new music?"

"I'll answer for her, yes," replied Laura. "We shall be at home any time after twelve."

The gentlemen all took leave. Onslow made

his exit the last. A rose that had been fastened in Clara's waist dropped on the floor. "May I have it?" he asked, picking it up.

"Why not? I wish it were fresher. Good night!" And she put out her hand. Onslow eagerly pressed it; but Clara, lifting his, said, "May this hand never strike except for justice and human freedom!"

"Amen to that!" replied Onslow, before he well took in the entire meaning of what she had said.

He hastened to rejoin his friends, following them through the corridor. He seemed to tread on air. "I was the only one she offered to shake hands with!" he exultingly soliloquised.

The three parted, after an interchange of good nights. Both Onslow and Kenrick betook themselves to their rooms, each with no desire for other companionship than his own rose-coloured dreams.

CHAPTER XV.

A FEMININE VAN AMBURGH.

She who ne'er answers till a husband cools,
Or, if she rules him, never shows she rules.

Pope.

THE morning after the dinner, Madame Volney rose at sunrise, and was stealing on tiptoe into her dressing-room, when Ratcliff, always a late riser, grumbled, "What's the matter?"

"There's to be an early church-service," she replied.

"Bah! You're always going to church."

The quadroon made no reply, but gently retired, dressed, and glided out of the house into the open air. On through the yet deserted streets she swiftly passed. A white fog brooded over the city. Heavy-winged sea-birds were slowly making their way overhead to the marshes of Lake Ponchartrain or still farther out to the

beaches of the Gulf. The sound of drums and fifes in the distance occasionally broke the matutinal stillness. The walls of the streets were covered with placards of meetings of volunteer companies—of the Wigman Rifles, the MacMahon Guards, the Beauregard Lancers, the Black Flag Invincibles.

After half-an-hour's walk, the quadroon paused before a house, on the door of which was a brass plate presenting the words—"Mrs. Gentry's Seminary for Young Ladies." While she looked and hesitated, a black girl came up from some steps leading into the basement, and with a mop and pail of water proceeded to wash the sidewalk.

"Is Esha in?" asked the quadroon.

"Yes, missis, Esha am in. Jes you go down dem steps inter de kitchen, an' dar you'll fine Esha, sure." And taking the direction pointed out, Madame found herself in the presence of a large, powerfully built mulatto woman, who was engaged in preparations for breakfast.

"Is this Esha?"

"Yes, missis, dis am nob'dy else."

"Esha, I want a few minutes' talk with you."

"Take a char, den, missis, and 'scuse my looks."

"You look like a good woman, Esha, so no matter for dress."

"Tahnk yer, missis. Esha's like de res'—not too good—but, nebdeless, dar's wuss folks dan she."

"Esha, who is this young girl Mr. Ratcliff is after?"

Esha's eyes snapped, and she looked sharply at her visitor. "Why you want ter know?" she asked.

"Are you a slave, Esha?"

"Yes, missis; I'se born a slabe, hab lib'd a slabe, an' 'spek to die a slabe."

"I, too, am a slave, Esha. I belonged to old Etienne La Harpe, who died six years ago. Though I had had two children, one by him and one by his son, the old man's widow sent me to the auction-block. I was sold to the highest bidder. I was bought by Mr. Carberry Ratcliff."

"Ah! by him—by him?" muttered Esha.

"I was handsome. He made me his favourite. I've been faithful to him. Even his wife, poor thing, blesses the day I came into the house. She would have died long ago but for my care. The slaves, too, come to me with their sorrows. I do what I can for their relief. I am not, by

nature, a bad woman. I would continue to serve this man and his household."

"Do yer lub him—dis Massa Ratcliff?"

"That's a hard question, Esha. He has treated me like a lady. I am practically at the head of his house. I have a carriage at my command. He gives me all the money I ask for. He prizes me for my prudence and good temper. I love him so far as this: I should hate the woman who threatened to step between me and him. Now tell me who this girl is whose photograph he has."

"She, missis? She am a slabe, too."

"She's a slave? Whose slave?"

"She 'longs to Massa Ratcliff!"

"And he has kept it a secret from me!"

Esha, like most slaves, was a quick judge of character. She had an almost intuitive perception of shams. Convinced of the quadroon's sincerity, she now threw a cushion on the floor, and, seating herself on it after the Oriental fashion, frankly told the whole story of the child Clara, and disclosed the true nature of her own relations to Ratcliff. When she had concluded, Madame Volney impulsively kissed her.

"And are you sure?" she asked, "quite sure,

that little Darling, as you call her, will resist Ratcliff to the last ? ”

“ Dat chile will sooner die dan gib up ter dat ole man. What you ’spose she went out ter buy dat day I met her last ? Wall, missis, she buyed a dagger.”

“ Good ! I love her ! ” cried Madame Volney, with flushed cheeks. “ But, Esha, do you know where she is now ? ”

“ Yes, missis ; but I tink I better not tell eb’n you—’cause, you see—”

“ She’s with Miss Tremaine, at the St. Charles ! ”

“ De Lord help us ! How yer know dat, missis ? ” cried Esha, alarmed. “ Do Massa Ratcliff know ’bout it ? ”

“ He knows it all, and has made his preparations for seizing the girl this very day. He’ll be here this morning to give you your directions. Now, Esha, don’t make a blunder. Don’t let him see that you’re the girl’s friend. Say nothing of my visit. I’ll tell you what I suspect : Ratcliff knows his wife can’t live three months longer. He has never had a child by her. All his children are mulattoes and illegitimate. The desire of his heart is for a lawful heir. He means— Are you sure the girl is white ? ”

"I tell yer, missis, whoebber sold her, fust stained her skin to put up de price. Shouldn't be 'stonished if dat chile was kidnapped."

Madame Volney looked at her watch. "Esha," she said, "you'll be employed by Ratcliff to help to secure her person. If, when he comes to you, the ribbon on his straw hat is *green*, do as he tells you. Should the ribbon be *black*, tell him to wait ten minutes. Then do you run round the corner to Aurora Street, where you'll see a carriage with a white handkerchief held out at the right-hand window. You'll find me there. We'll drive to the St. Charles, and take the girl with us somewhere out of Ratcliff's reach. Can you remember all I've told you?"

'Ebry word of it, missis. Tahnk de Lord fur sendin' yer. Watch Massa Ratcliff sharp. Fix him sure, missis—fix him sure!"

"Trust me, Esha! He seizes no young girl to-day, unless I let him. But be very prudent. You may need money."

"No, missis. No pay fur tellin' de troof."

"But you may need it for the child's sake."

"Oh, yis, missis. I'll take it fur de chile, sure."

Madame Volney placed in her hands thirty dollars in gold, then left the house, and, hailing a carriage

at a neighbouring stand, told the driver where to take her. "Double speed, double fare!" she added. In ten minutes she was at home.

Ratcliff had not yet come down. He had rung the bell, and given orders for an early breakfast. Madame went up to her dressing-room, and put on her most becoming mourning attire. We have called her a quadroon; but her complexion was of that clear golden hue, mixed with olive and a dash of carnation, which so many Southern amateurs prefer to the pure red and white of a light-haired Anglo-Saxon.

When Ratcliff came down, he complimented her on her good looks, and kissed her.

"I've been to confession," she said, as she touched the tap of a splendid silver urn, and let hot water into the cups.

"And what have you been confessing, Josy?"

"I've been confessing how very foolish I've been the last few months."

"Foolish in what, Josephine?"

"Foolish in my jealousy of *you*."

"Jealousy? What cause have I given you for jealousy? I've been too much bothered about public matters to have time to think of any woman but you."

"That's partly true. But don't I know what you most desire of earthly things?"

"Of course! You know I desire the success of the Southern Confederacy, corner-stone and all."

"No, not that. You covet one thing even more than that."

"Indeed! What is it?"

"A legitimate child who may inherit your wealth, and transmit your name."

"Yes, I'd like a child. But we must take things as they come along. You mustn't be jealous because now and then I may have dropped a hint of regret that I've no direct heir to my estate."

"You've not confined yourself to hints. You've been provident in act as well as in thought."

"What the deuce do you mean?"

"Don't be angry when I tell you, you haven't planned a plan the last three months of which I haven't been aware."

"Well, I've always thought you the keenest woman of my acquaintance; but I'd like to have it put through my hair what you're exactly driving at now. What is it?"

"This: I know your scheme in regard to Miss Murray, and, what is more, I highly approve of it."

"You're the Devil!" exclaimed Ratcliff, starting up from his seat. Then, seeing Josephine's unaffected smile and evident good humour, he sat down.

"At first I was a little chagrined," she said, "especially when I found Mademoiselle so very pretty. But I've reflected much on it since, and talked with my confessor about it."

"The deuce you have! Talked with your confessor, eh?"

"Yes, with my confessor. And the result is, that, so far from opposing you in your plan, I've concluded to give it my support."

"And what do you understand to be my plan?"

"Perhaps 'tis vague even in your own mind as yet. But I'll tell you what I mean. Your wife is not likely to live many weeks longer. You'll inherit from her a large estate. You'll wish to marry again, and this time with a view to offspring. Both taste and policy will lead you to choose a young and accomplished woman. Who more suitable than Miss Murray?"

"Why, Josephine, she's a slave."

"A slave, is she? Look me in the face and tell me, if you can, you believe she has a drop of African blood in her veins. No; that child must

have been kidnapped. And you have often suspected as much."

"Where the Devil— Confound the woman!" muttered Ratcliff, half frightened at what looked like clairvoyance.

"Yes," she continued, "her parents must have been of gentle blood. Look at her hands and feet. Hear her speak."

"What is there you don't find out, Josy?" exclaimed Ratcliff. "Here you tell me things that have been working in my mind, which I was hardly aware of myself till you mentioned them!"

"Oh, I've known all about your search for the girl. 'Twas not till after a struggle I could reconcile it to my mind to lend you my aid. But this was what I thought: He will soon be a widower. He will desire to marry; not that he does not love his Josy—"

"Yes, Josy, you're right there; you're a jewel of a woman. Such devilish good common sense! Go on."

"He would marry, not that he does not love his Josy, but because he wants a legitimate child of his own. That's but natural and proper. Why should I oppose it, and thus give him cause to cast me out from his affections? Why not give

him new reason for attachment, by showing him I am capable of a sacrifice for his sake? Yes, he will love me none the less for letting him see that without one jealous pang I can help him to a young and beautiful wife."

"But, Josy, would you really recommend my marrying this girl?"

"Why not? Where will you find her equal?"

"But just think of it—she was sold to me at public auction as a slave."

"Yes, and the next day Mrs. Gentry wrote you that the colouring stuff had washed off from her skin, and she was whiter than any one in the school. You wrote not a word in reply. But did not the thought occur to you, the child has been kidnapped? Of course it did! In this great city of rogues and murderers, did you not consider there were plenty of men capable of such an act? Deny it if you can."

"Josy, you're enough to unsteady a man's nerves. How did you discover there was such a being as Miss Murray? and how did you get out of my mind what I had thought about the kidnapping? and how, what I myself had hardly dreamed of, the idea, namely, of making her my wife?"

“When one loves,” replied Josephine, “one is quick to watch, and sharp to detect. At first, as I’ve told you, I was disposed to be jealous. But reflection soon convinced me ’twould be for your happiness to take this young person, now in the false position of a slave, and educate her for your wife. Even if the world should know her story, what would you care? You’re above all social criticism. Besides, would it not be comical for our swarthy Creole ladies to snuff at such a beautiful blonde, whose very presence would give the lie to all that malice could insinuate as to her birth?”

“Oh, I don’t care for what society may say. I’m out of the reach of its sneers. And what you urge, Josy, is reasonable—very. Yes, she’s a remarkably fine girl, and I’ve certainly taken a strong fancy to her. Some of our first young men are already deep in love with her. Of course she’d be eternally grateful, if I were to emancipate her and make her my wife.”

Josephine could hardly repress a smile of triumph to see this thorough-bred tyrant, who knew no law but his own will, thus falling into the snare she was so delicately spreading for him. Something of the satisfaction Van Amburgh might have felt when his tiger succumbed, spread its

glow over her cheeks. Never in his coarse calculations had Ratcliff thought of showing Clara any further mercy than he had shown to the humblest of his concubines. And yet Josephine, by her apt suggestions, had half persuaded him, little given as he was to introspective analysis, that the idea of making the girl his wife had originated in his own mind!

"Did he keep the whole story from her because he supposed Josy would be jealous?" asked the quadroon, with a caress.

"Why, yes, Josy; to tell the truth, I thought there'd have to be a scene sure, when you found out I'd been educating such a girl with a view to her taking your place some time. So I kept dark. But you're a trümp—you are! I shouldn't wonder if you could acquire the same influence over her that you now have over my wife."

"Easily!" said Josephine. "I've seen her. I like her. I know we should agree. When she learns it was my wish you should emancipate and marry her, she will regard me as her friend. I can teach her not to be jealous of me."

"Capital!" exclaimed Ratcliff. "Josy can remain where she is in the family. Josy will not have to abdicate. There'll be no unpleasant row

between the two women. The whole thing can be harmoniously managed."

"Why not, Carberry? And let me say 'twould be folly to seize this girl rudely, wounding her pride and rousing her resentment. The true way is to decoy her gently till you get her into your possession, and then secure her by such means as I can suggest."

"Hang me, but you're right again, Josy! I had thought of carrying her off this very day."

"Yes, I supposed so."

"Supposed so? Where in the name of all the devils did you get your information? For there's but one person beside myself who knows anything about it."

"And that's Mr. Tremaine!"

"So it is, by Jove! How did you know it?"

"I put this and that together, and drew an inference. You mean to place her again, for the present, at Mrs. Gentry's."

"True! That was my plan. But I hadn't mentioned it to a soul."

"What of that? Where one loves, one has such insight! But is there anyone at Mrs. Gentry's on whom you can rely to keep watch of the girl?"

"Yes, there's an old slave-woman—Esha. She has a grudge against the little miss, and isn't likely to be too indulgent."

"But why, Carberry, would you take the little miss to Mrs. Gentry's rather than to your own house? I see! You thought I would be in the way; that I would be jealous of her! Confess!"

"Yes, Josy, I didn't think anything else."

"Well, now, let me plan for you: first I, with Esha, will call on her. Esha can easily persuade her that the best thing she can do will be to come with us to this house. We'll have the blue room ready for her. It being between two other rooms, and having no other exit than through them, she will not have another chance to abscond. Esha would perhaps be a suitable person to keep guard. But then probably Mrs. Gentry wouldn't part with Esha."

"Bah! Gentry will have to do as I order, or see her school broken up as an Abolition concern. Your plan strikes me favourably, Josy; but what if the girl should refuse to accompany you?"

"We can have an officer close by to apply to in case of need."

"Of course! What a woman you are for plotting!"

"Yes, Carberry, give me *carte blanche* to act for you, and I'll have her here before one o'clock. But there's a condition, Carberry."

"Name it, Josy."

"It is, that so long as your present wife lives, you shall keep strictly aloof from the maiden, not even taking the liberty of a kiss. Don't you see why? She has been religiously brought up. She is pure, with affections disengaged. Would it be for your future interests as a husband to undo all that has been done for her moral education? Surely no! You mean to make her your wife; and the wife of Carberry Ratcliff must be intemperate!"

"Right! right! A thousand times right!" exclaimed the debauchee, his pride getting the ascendancy.

"For the present, then," continued the quadroneer, "you, a married man, must hardly look on her. Consent to this, and I'll take the whole trouble of the affair off your hands. I'll bring the girl here, and so mould her that she will be prepared to be your lawful wife as soon as decency may permit."

Ratcliff rose from the table, and paced the floor. Under Josephine's way of presenting the subject,

what had seemed rather an embarrassing job began to assume a new and attractive aspect. How well-judged the whole arrangement! The idea of elevating Clara to the exalted position of successor to the present Mrs. Ratcliff was fast becoming more and more inviting to his contemplation. Wealth in a wife would be of no account. He would have enough of his own. Family rank was desirable; but did not the girl give every sign of high blood? It would not be surprising if, in fact, she were of a stock almost equal to his own in gentility. Besides, would not he, a Ratcliff, carry, lodged in his own person, sufficient dignity of pedigree to cover the genealogical shortcomings of a wife?

The fact that Onslow and Kenrick admired her did much to enhance the girl's value in his eyes; and he could readily see how it would be for Madame Volney's interests, since she knew he meant to marry again, to have the training, to a certain extent, of his future wife, and put her under a seeming obligation. And so the quadroon's protestations that she had conquered all jealousy on the subject seemed to him the most natural thing in the world.

"Well, Josy," said he, after a silence of some

minutes, "I accept your condition; I give the promise you demand."

"Honour bright?"

"Yes; you'll have me close under your eyes. I commit the girl entirely to your keeping. I will myself go at once and see Esha, and send her to you here. I'll also see Tremaine, and shut up his mouth. The fellow owes me money. Then you can take Esha in the carriage, and go and put your plan in execution."

"Good! You've decided wisely, Carberry. Shall I order the carriage for you?"

"Yes. I'll send it back to you with Esha, and then myself go on foot to the St. Charles to see Tremaine."

Ratcliff passed out of the breakfast-room, and the quadron went to the hat-closet in the hall, and removed the straw hat with a *black* ribbon on it, leaving the one distinguished by a *green* band. She then rang and ordered the carriage.

CHAPTER XVI.

ONE OF THE INSTITUTIONS.

Small service is true service while it lasts;
Of friends, however humble, scorn not one.

Wordsworth.

ON being bought at the auction block by Ratcliff, and introduced into his household, Josephine Volney, the quadroon, had devoted herself to the health of his wife from purely selfish motives. But in natures not radically perverse, beneficence cannot long be divorced from benevolence. Josephine believed her interests lay in preventing as long as possible a second marriage: hence, at first, her sedulous care of the invalid wife.

Those who know anything of society in the Slave States are well aware that concubinage (one of the institutions of *the* institution) is there, in many conspicuous instances, as patiently acquiesced in by wives as polygamy is in Utah. Mrs. Ratcliff had, at first, almost adored her husband. Very

unattractive, personally, she had yet an affectionate nature, and one of her most marked traits was gratitude for kindness. Soon Ratcliff dropped the mask by which he had won her ; and she, instead of lamenting over her mistake, accepted as a necessary evil the fact of his relations to the handsome slave. The latter attempted no deception, but conducted herself as discreetly as any woman, so educated, could have done, under such compulsory circumstances.

Mrs. Ratcliff was soon touched by Josephine's obvious solicitude to minister to her happiness and health. The slave-girl's childlike frankness begot frankness on the part of the wife. Seeing that their interests were identical, each was gradually drawn to the other, till a sincere and tender attachment was the result. The wife was made aware of her husband's calculations in regard to a second marriage ; and Josephine found in that wife a faithful and crafty ally, too deep, with all her shallowness, to be fathomed by the husband.

No sooner had Ratcliff quitted the house, on the morning of the breakfast described, than Josephine hurried to the invalid's room. A poor diminutive Creole lady, with wrinkled skin, darker even than the quadroon's, and with one shoulder

higher than the other, she sat, with a white crape shawl wrapped round her, in a large arm-chair. Her face, as Josephine entered, lighted up with a smile of welcome that for a moment seemed to transfigure even those withered and pain-stricken features. In half an hour Josephine had put her in possession of all the developments of the last two days, and of her own plans for controlling the movements of Ratcliff in regard to the young white woman supposed to be his slave.

With absorbed interest the invalid listened to the details, and approved warmly of what Josephine had planned. Her feminine curiosity was pleased with the idea of having, in her own house and under her own eye, this young person whom Ratcliff had presumed to think of as a second wife! while the thought of baffling him in his selfish schemes sent a shock of pleasure to her heart. Furthermore, the excitement seemed to brace up her frame anew, and to ruffle into breezy action the torpid tide of her monotonous existence.

Esha was announced and introduced. A new and refreshing incident for the invalid! And, now if Esha had needed any further confirmation of the quadroon's story, it was amply afforded.

Josephine's project for the present security of Ratcliff's white slave was discussed and approved.

The carriage was waiting at the door. "Go now," said Mrs. Ratcliff, "and be sure you bring the girl right up to see me."

In less than twenty minutes afterwards, as Clara, lonely and anxious, sat in Tremaine's drawing-room, a servant entered and told her that a coloured woman was in Number 13, waiting to see her. Supposing it could be no other than Esha, she followed the servant to the room, and, on entering, recoiled at sight of a stranger. For a moment the quadron was so absorbed in scanning the girl's whole personal outline, that there was silence on both sides.

"What's wanting?" asked Clara, half dreading some trick.

"Please close the door, and I'll tell you," was the reply. Clara did as she was requested. "Have you any objections to locking the door?" continued the quadron.

"None whatever," replied Clara, and she locked it.

"You fear I may be here as an agent of Mr. Ratcliff," said Josephine.

"Ah! am I betrayed?" cried Clara, instinc-

tively carrying her hand to her bosom, where lay the weapon she had bought. The quadroon noticed the gesture, and smiled. "Sit down," she said, "and do not consider me an enemy until I have proved myself such. Listen to what I have to propose." Clara took a seat where she could be within reach of the door, and then pointed to the sofa.

"Yes, I will sit here," said the quadroon, complying with the tacit invitation. "Now, listen, dear young lady, to a proposition I am authorised to make. Mr. Ratcliff will very soon be a widower. His wife cannot survive three months. He has seen you, and likes you. He is willing to lift you from slavery to freedom—from poverty to wealth—from obscurity to grandeur—on one very easy condition; this, namely: that, as soon after his wife's death as propriety will allow, you will yourself become Mrs. Ratcliff."

"Never!" exclaimed Clara, the blood flaming up like red auroras over neck, face, and brow.

"But consider, my dear. You will, in the first place, be forthwith treated with all the respect and consideration due to Mr. Ratcliff's future bride. As soon as he has you secure as his wife, he will emancipate you—make you a free woman.

Think of that! Mr. Ratcliff is supposed to be worth at least five millions. You will at once have such a purse as no other young woman in the city can boast. Now why not be reasonable? Why not say *yes* to the proposition?"

"Never! never!" cried Clara, carrying her hand again to her breast with a gesture she thought significant only to herself.

Josephine rose and felt of the bosom of Clara's dress till she distinguished the weapon of which Esha had spoken. Then a smile, so sincere as to forbid suspicion, broke over the quadroon's face, and she exclaimed: "Let me kiss you! Let me hug you!" And having given vent to her satisfaction in an embrace, she unlocked the door, and there stood Esha.

"What does it all mean, Esha?" asked Clara, bewildered.

"It mean, darlin', dat Massa Ratcliff hab tracked you to dis yere place, an' we two women mean to pull de wool ober his eyes, so he can't do yer no harm no how. You jes do what we want yer to, and we'll bodder him so he sha'n't know his head's his own.

Josephine then communicated all the facts that had come to her knowledge in regard to Ratcliff's

pursuit of Clara, together with her own conversation with him that morning, and the plan she had contrived for his discomfiture. "As soon," she said, "as such an opportunity offers that I can be sure you can be put beyond his reach, I will supply you with money, and help you to escape."

Truth beamed from her looks, and made itself musical in her tones, and Clara gratefully pressed her hand.

"And shall I have Esha with me?" she asked.

"Yes; and Mrs. Ratcliff, though an invalid, will also befriend you. 'Twill be strange indeed if we four women can't defeat one man."

"But I shall have all the slave-hunters in the Confederacy after me if I try to get away."

"Do not fear. We have golden keys that open many doors of escape."

Clara did not hesitate. She had faith in Esha's quickness, as well as in her own, to detect insincerity. And so she was persuaded that her safest present course would be to go boldly into the house of the very man she had most cause to dread!

It was agreed that the three should leave together at once. Clara went to her sleeping-room, and there, encountering the chambermaid, made

her a present of two dollars, and sent her off. Laura was absent at the dressmaker's.

"I would like," said Clara, "to find out at the bar what charge has been made for my stay here, and pay it."

"Let me do it for you," suggested the quad-room.

"If you would be so kind!" replied Clara. "Here are fifteen dollars. I don't think it can come to more than that."

Without taking the money, Josephine left the room. In five minutes she returned with a receipted bill, made out against "Miss Tremaine's friend." This receipt Clara enclosed, together with a five-dollar gold-piece, in a letter to Laura, containing these words:—

"I thank you for all the hospitality I have received at your hands. Enclosed you will find my hotel bill receipted, also five dollars for the use of such dresses as I have worn. With best wishes for your mother's restoration to health and for your own welfare, I bid you good by. "P. B."

The three women now passed through a side entrance to the street where the carriage was in waiting; and before half an hour had elapsed, Clara was established in the blue room of the

house in Lafayette Square—the invalid lady had seen her and approved—and Esha, like a faithful hound, was following her steps, keeping watch, as Ratcliff had directed, though for other reasons than he had imagined.

Hardly had Clara left the hotel, before Vance called. He had come, fully resolved to wring from her, if possible, the secret of her trouble. Much to his disappointment, he learned she had gone and would not return. He called a second time, and saw Miss Tremaine. That young lady, warned and threatened by her father, now displayed such a ready and facile gift for lying, as would have highly distinguished her in diplomacy.

“Only think of it, Mr. Vance,” said the intrepid Laura, “it turns out that Miss Brown has been having a love affair with one of her father’s clerks, a low-born Yankee. He followed her to New Orleans—managed to send a letter to her at Mrs. Gentry’s—Perdita went forth to find him, but, failing in her search, came to claim hospitality of me. This morning her father—a very decent man he seems to be—arrived from Mobile and took her, fortunately before she had been able to meet her lover.”

The story was plausible. Vance, however, looked the narrator sharply and searchingly in the face. She met his glance with an expression beaming with innocence and candour. It was irresistible. The strong man surrendered all suspicion, and gave in "beat."

CHAPTER XVII.

A DOUBLE VICTORY.

Whence it is manifest that the soul, speaking in a natural sense, loseth nothing by Death, but is a very considerable gainer thereby. For she does not only possess as much body as before, with as full and solid dimensions, but has that accession cast in, of having this body more invigorated with life and motion than it was formerly.—*Henry More*, A.D. 1659.

No, sure, 'tis ever youth there! Time and Death
Follow our Flesh no more; and that forced opinion,
That Spirits have no sexes, I believe not.
There *must* be love—there *is* love!

Beaumont and Fletcher.

“I SHALL be jealous of this little lady if you go on at this rate,” said Madame Volney to Mrs. Ratcliff, a week after Clara had been established in the house.

“Never fear that I shall love you less, my dear Josephine,” replied the invalid. Then, pointing to her heart, she added: “I’ve a place here big enough for both of you. I only wish ’twere in better repair.”

"Have you had those sharp throbbings to-day?"

"Not badly. You warn me against excitement. I sometimes think I'm better under it. Certainly I've improved since Esha and Darling have been here. What should I do now without Darling to play and read to me? What a touch she has! And what a voice! And then her selection of music and of books is so good. By the way, she promised to translate a story for me from the German. I wonder if she has it finished. Go ask her."

The answer was brought by Clara herself, and Josephine left the two together. Yes, Clara had written out the story. It was called *Zu Spät*, or "Too Late," and was by an anonymous author. Clara read aloud from it. She had read about ten minutes, when the following passage occurred:—

"Selfish and superstitious, the Baroness put out of her mind the irksome thought of making her will; but now, struck speechless by disease, and paralysed in her hands, she was impotent to communicate her wishes. Her agonised effort to say something in her last moments undoubtedly related to a will. But she died intestate, and all her large estate passed into the hands of a comparative stranger. And thus the humble friends

whose kindness had saved and prolonged her life were left to struggle with the world for a meagre support. If in the new condition to which she had passed through death she could look back on her selfishness and its consequences, what poignant regrets must have been hers !”

“Read that passage again,” said Mrs. Ratcliff, adding, after Clara had complied, “You needn’t read any more now.”

That evening the wife summoned the husband to an interview. Somewhat surprised at the unusual command, Ratcliff made his appearance and took a seat at her side. His manner was that of a man who thinks no woman can resist him, and that his transparent cajoleries are the proper pabulum for her weak intellect—poor thing !

“Well, my peerless one, what is it ?” he asked.

“I wish to talk with you, Ratcliff, about this white slave of yours. What do you think of her ?”

“Think of her ? Nothing ! I’ve given no thought to the subject. I’ve hardly looked at her.”

“Lie Number 1,” thought the invalid, looking him in the face, but betraying no distrust in her expression.

The truth was, that Ratcliff, for the first time in

his life, was under the power of a sentiment which, if not love, was all that there was in his nature akin to it. Even at political meetings his thoughts would stray from the public business, from the fulminations of "last-ditch" orators and curb-stone generals, and revert to that youthful and enchanting figure. True, Josephine rigidly exacted conformity to the conditions that kept him aloof from all communication with the girl. But, Ratcliff, through the window-blinds, would now and then see her, in the pride of youth and beauty, walking with Esha in the garden. He would hear her songs, too. And once—when he thought no one knew it—though the quadroon had her eye on him—he overheard Clara's conversation. "She has mind as well as beauty," thought he.

And that brilliant and dainty creature was *his*—*his*! He could, if he chose, marry her to the blackest of his slaves. Of course he could! There was no indignity he could not put upon her, under the plea of upholding his rights as a master. Had he not once proved it in another case, on his own plantation? And who had ever dared raise a voice against the just assertion of his rights? Truly, any such rash malcontents, opening their

lips, would have been in danger of being ducked as Abolitionists!

Patience! Yes, Josephine was right in her scheme of keeping the young girl secluded from his too fascinating society. Not a hint must the maiden have of the favour with which he regarded her—not an intimation, until the present Mrs. Ratcliff should considerably “step out.” Then— Well, what then? Why, then an end to hopes deferred and desires unfulfilled! Then an immediate private marriage, to be followed by a public one, after a decent interval.

Every secret device and cherished anticipation, meanwhile, of that imperious nature was understood and analysed by the quadroon. She felt a vindictive satisfaction in seeing him riot in calculations which she would task her best energies to baffle. Esha’s stories of his conduct to Estelle had withered the last bloom of affection which Josephine’s heart had cherished towards him.

“I’m glad you’re so indifferent to this white slave,” said Mrs. Ratcliff to her husband.

“And why should you be glad, my pet?”

“Because, Ratcliff, I want you to give her to me.”

Staggered by the suddenness of the request,

and puzzled for an answer, he replied: "But she may prove a very valuable piece of property. There's many a man who would pay ten thousand dollars for her, two or three years hence."

"Well, if you don't want to *give* her, then *sell* her to me. I'll pay you twenty thousand dollars for her."

"You shall have her for nothing, my dear," said Ratcliff, after reflecting that the slave would still be virtually his, inasmuch as no conveyance of her could be made by his wife without his consent.

Detecting the trap, the wife at once replied: "Thank you, dear husband. This generosity is so like you! Can she be freed?"

"No. There are recent State laws against emancipation. It was found there were too many weak-minded persons, who, in their last moments, beginning to have scruples about slaveholding, would think to purchase heaven by emancipating their slaves. The example was bad, and productive of discontent among those left in bondage."

"Well, then, Ratcliff, there's one little form you must consent to. The title-deed must be vested in Mr. Winslow."

Ratcliff started as if recoiling from a pitfall. The remark brought home to his mind the disagreeable consideration that there was nearly half a million of dollars which ought to come to his wife, but which was absolutely in the keeping and under the control of Simon Winslow. It happened in this wise: The father of Mrs. Ratcliff, old Kittler, not having that entire faith in his son-in-law which so distinguished a member of the chivalry as the South Carolinian ought to have commanded, gave into the hands of Winslow a large sum of money, relying solely upon his honour to use it *in loco parentis* for the benefit of the lady. But there were no legal restrictions imposed upon Simon as to the disposition of the property, and if he had chosen to give or throw it away, or keep it himself, he might have done it with impunity.

Winslow acted much as he would have done if Mrs. Ratcliff had been his own daughter. He invested the money solely for her ultimate benefit and disposal, seeing that her husband already had millions which she had brought him. Ratcliff, however, regarded as virtually his the money in Winslow's hands, and had several angry discussions with him on the subject. But Simon

was impracticable. The only concession he would make was to say, that, in the event of Mrs. Ratcliff's death, he should respect any *requests* she might have made. There had consequently been an informal will, if *will* it could be called, made by her a year before, in Ratcliff's favour.

Wanting money now to carry out his speculations in slaves, Ratcliff had again applied to Winslow for this half a million — had tried wheedlings and threats, both in vain. He had even threatened to denounce Simon before the Committee of Safety—to denounce him as a “d—d Yankee and Abolitionist.” To which Simon had replied by taking a pinch of snuff.

Simon, though born somewhere in the vicinity of Plymouth Rock, was one of the oldest residents of New Orleans. He had helped General Jackson to beat off Pakenham. He had stood by him in his rough handling of the *habeas corpus* act. Simon had been a slaveholder, though rather as an experiment than for profit; for, finding that the State Legislature were going to pass a law against emancipation, he took time by the forelock, and not only made all his slaves free, but placed them where they could earn their living.

The invalid wife's proposal to vest the title to

the white slave in Winslow caused in Ratcliff a visible embarrassment.

"You know, my dear," he replied, "I would do anything for your gratification; but there are particular reasons why —"

"Why what, husband?"

"Give me a few days to think the matter over. We'll talk of it when I haven't so much on my mind. Meanwhile I'll tell you what I *will* consent to: Josephine shall be yours to do with just as you please."

"Come, that's something," said the wife. "What I ask, then, is, that you convey Josephine to Mr. Winslow to hold in trust for me. Will you do this the first thing in the morning?"

"I certainly will," replied Ratcliff, flattering himself that his ready compliance with one of his wife's morbid whims would more than content her for his evasion of the other.

"Well, then, good night," said she, pointing to the door.

She submitted, with a slight shudder, imperceptible to Ratcliff, to be kissed by him, and he went downstairs. Josephine issued from behind a screen whither the wife had beckoned her to go on his

first coming in. If there had been any remnant of affection for him in the quadroon's heart, she was well cured of it by what she had heard.

The invalid called for writing materials, and penned a note.

"Take this, Josephine," she said, "early to-morrow to Mr. Winslow. In it I simply tell him of Ratcliff's proposition in regard to yourself, and ask him, the moment that affair is attended to, to come and see me."

The clock was striking twelve the next day when Mr. Winslow came, and Josephine ushered him into the invalid's presence.

"You may leave us alone for a while, Josephine," she said.

As soon as the quadroon had gone out and shut the door, the invalid motioned to Winslow to draw near. He was upwards of seventy, tall and erect, with venerable gray locks, and an expression of face at once brisk and gentle, benevolent and keen.

"What's the state of the property you still hold for me, Mr. Winslow?"

"It is half invested in real estate in Northern cities, and half in special deposits of gold in Northern banks."

" Indeed ! Then you must have sent it North long before these troubles began ? "

" Yes, more than four years ago — soon after the Nashville Convention."

" What's the amount in your hands ? "

" Half a million ; probably it will be seven hundred thousand, if gold should rise, as I think it will."

" And how much, Mr. Winslow, of the property my father left me has gone to Mr. Ratcliff ? "

" More than three millions."

" Very well. I wish to revoke all previous requests I may have made as to the disposition of the property in your hands. Now take your pen and write as I shall dictate."

" Let me first explain, Mrs. Ratcliff, that any conveyance of personalty you might make would be null without your husband's consent. But in this case forms are of no account, and even witnesses are unnecessary. Everything is left to my individual honour and discretion."

" I'm aware of that, Mr. Winslow. It is not so much a will as a series of requests I've to make."

" I see you understand it, madam. The memoranda you give me I will embody in the form of a will of my own. Proceed ! "

"Put down," said the invalid, "a hundred thousand for the Orphan Asylum."

"Excellent; but as the Secessionists are using that sacred fund for war purposes, I shall take the liberty of withholding the bequest for the present. Go on."

"A hundred thousand to the Lying-in Hospital."

"Nothing could be more proper. Proceed."

"A hundred thousand to the fund for the Sisters of Charity."

"Ah! those dear sisters! Bless you for remembering them, madam!"

"A hundred thousand to be distributed in sums of five thousand severally to the persons whose names I have here written down."

She handed him a sheet of paper containing the names, and he transcribed them carefully.

"And now," resumed the invalid, "the remainder of the fund in your possession I wish paid over, when you can safely do it, one half to the slave Josephine, the other half to the white slave, Ellen Murray, of whom Josephine will tell you, and whom you must rescue from slavery. Both must be free before the money can be of any service to them."

"Of course. Their owner could at once appropriate any sum you might leave to them, even though it were a million of dollars."

"You have now heard all I have to say, Mr. Winslow."

"Then, madam, you will please write under these memoranda with your own hand something to this effect, and sign your name, with date, place, et cetera: '*This I declare to be my own spontaneous, unbiassed request to Mr. Winslow, to dispose of the property in his possession, in the manner herein-above stated.*' The autograph will have no legal force, but it may serve to satisfy your husband."

The lady wrote, and handed back the paper.

"Good!" said Winslow. "Before taking another meal, I will draw up and sign a will by which your requests can be made effectual."

"Your hand, Mr. Winslow! My father trusted you as he did no other man, and I thank you for your loyalty to what you knew to be his wishes."

"The task he put upon me has been a very simple one, madam. Good by. We shall soon meet again, I hope."

"Yes. I shall be quite well of my heart-complaint *then*. Good by."

Hardly had Winslow left the house than Ratcliff drove up and entered. He was in a jubilant mood. News had just been received of the Confederate victory at Bull Run. He knocked at his wife's door. "Come in!" He entered. Josephine and Clara were present, trying to soothe the invalid. One was bathing her forehead with *eau de Cologne*; the other was kneeling, and rubbing her feet. She had been telling them what she had done. She had kissed first one and then the other, lavishing on them profuse tokens of affection. Her eyes gleamed with an unnatural brightness, and her cheeks were flushed with the glow of a great excitement.

As Ratcliff came in she rose, and, standing between Josephine and Clara, put an arm round the shoulder of each, and looked her husband steadily in the face. Her expression was that of one who cannot find words adequate to the utterance of some absorbing emotion. The look was compounded at once of defiance and of pity. Her lips moved, but no articulation followed. Then suddenly, with a gasped "Ah!" she convulsively bowed her body like a tree smitten by the tornado. The pain, if sharp, was but for a moment.

The motion was her last. She sank into the

faithful arms that encircled her. The one attenuated chord that bound her to the mortal life had been snapped.

Ratcliff started forward, and satisfied himself that his wife was really dead. Then he looked up at Clara.

She caught the expression of his countenance, and instinctively comprehended it, even as the little bird understands the hawk, or the lamb the wolf. Josephine saw it too. What a triumph now to think that she was no longer *his* slave!

But Clara—what of *her*? Mrs. Ratcliff's sudden death seemed to shatter the last barrier between her and danger.

Ratcliff did not affect to conceal his satisfaction. Here was a double victory! The Federals and his wife both disposed of in one day! Youth and beauty within his grasp! Truly, fortune seemed to be heaping her good things upon him. That half a million too, in Winslow's hands, would come very opportunely; for slaves could be bought cheap, dog-cheap, now that croakers were predicting ruin to the institution.

"Josephine," said he, "I must go at once to see Winslow, the late"—how readily he seized on that word!—"the late Mrs. Ratcliff's man of

business. I may not be home to dinner. You'd better not take out the carriage. The horses would be frightened; for the streets are all in commotion with salvos for our great victory. Good by till I return."

Once more he turned on Clara that look from which she had twice before shrunk dismayed and exasperated.

After he had gone, "Help me to escape at once!" she exclaimed.

"No," replied Josephine. "This is our safest place for the present. The avenues of escape from the city are all closed; and we should find it difficult to go where we would not be tracked. The danger is not immediate. Do not look so wild, Darling. I swear to you that I will protect you to the last. Whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge."

CHAPTER XVIII.

SATAN AMUSES HIMSELF.

We can die ;
 And, dying nobly, though we leave behind us
 These clods of flesh, that are too massy burdens,
 Our living souls fly crowned with living conquests.
Beaumont and Fletcher.

VANCE sat in his room at the St. Charles. He seemed plunged in meditation. His fingers were playing with a little gold cross he wore round his neck ; a trinket made very precious by the dying kiss and pious faith of Estelle. It recalled to him daily those memorable moments of their last earthly parting. And she now seemed so near to him, so truly alive to him, in all his perplexities, that he would hardly have been surprised to see her suddenly standing in immortal youth by his side. How could he, while thus possessed with her enchanting image, evoke from his heart any warmer sentiment than that of friendship for any other woman ?

He thought of the so-called Perdita. He feared he would have to leave the city without getting any further light than Miss Tremaine had vouchsafed on the mystery that surrounded that interesting young person. One thing, on reconsideration, puzzled him and excited his distrust in Laura's story. Perdita had pretended that the name Brown was improvised for the occasion—assumed while she was conversing with him. Could she have been deceiving?

There were still other reflections that brought anxiety. He had not yet heard from Peek. Could that faithful friend have failed in all his inquiries for Hyde?

The immediate matter for consideration, however, was the danger that began to darken over Vance's own path. It had been ascertained by leading Secessionists, interested in providing for the financial wants of the Rebellion, that Vance had drawn more than a hundred thousand dollars of special deposits of gold from the banks since the fall of Sumter. The question was now put to him by the usurpers. What had been done with that money? He was summoned to appear before the authorities with an explanation. A committee

would be in session that very evening to hear his statement.

There was still another subject to awaken his concern. Kenrick had been called on to set at rest certain unfavourable reports, by appearing before that same committee, and accepting a captaincy in the Confederate army. Onslow was to be presented with a colonel's commission.

Vance had made preparations for the escape of Kenrick and himself. A little steam-tug called the Artful Dodger, carrying the Confederate flag, lay in the river. Everybody supposed she was a sort of spy on United States cruisers. For two days she had lain there, with steam all up, ready to start at a moment's warning. Her crew appeared to be all ashore, except the captain, mate, engineer, cook, and two stewards. The last three were black men. The other three, if they were not Yankees, had caught some peculiarities of pronunciation which the schoolmaster is vainly striving to extirpate at the North. These men said *beeyownd* for *bound*, and *neeyow* for *now*.

While Vance was meditating on his arrangements, a card was brought to him. It bore the name "Simon Winslow."

"Show him in," said Vance to the servant.

As Simon entered, Vance recognised him as the individual who had aided him the day of the rescue of Quattles from the mob.

"There's a sort of freemasonry, Mr. Vance," said Winslow, "that assures me I may trust you. Your sympathies, sir, are with the Union?"

Wary and suspicious, Vance bowed, but made no reply.

"Do not doubt me," continued Winslow. "True, I've been a slaveholder. But 'tis now several years since I owned a slave. Mr. Vance, I want your counsel, and, it may be, your aid. Still distrustful? How shall I satisfy you that I'm not a traitor knave?"

"Enough, Mr. Winslow! I'll trust your three-score years and your loyal face. Tell me what I can do for you. Be seated."

They sat down, and the old man resumed: "I have lived in this city more than forty years, Mr. Vance, but for some time I've foreseen that there would be little hope for a man of Northern birth unless he would consent to howl with the pack for secession and a slave confederacy. Now I'm too old to tune my bark to any such note. The consequence is, I am a marked man, liable at

any moment to be seized and imprisoned. My property here is nearly all in real estate; so if that is confiscated, as it will be, I've no fear but Uncle Sam will soon come to give it back to me. The rest of my assets it will be hard for the keenest-scented inquisitor to find. To-day, by the death of Mrs. Ratcliff—

“Of what Mrs. Ratcliff?” inquired Vance.

“Mrs. Carberry Ratcliff. By her death I become the legally irresponsible, and therefore all the more *morally* the responsible, manager of an estate of more than half a million, of which a considerable portion is to be used by me for the benefit of two women at present slaves.”

“But her husband will never consent to it?” interposed Vance.

“Fortunately,” replied Winslow, “all the property was some time since sent North and converted into gold. Well: I've just come from an interview with Ratcliff himself. He came to tell me of his wife's death. He brought with him a *quasi* will, signed a year ago, in which his wife requests me to hand over to him such property as I may consider at her disposal. He called on me to demand that I should forthwith surrender my trust; said he was in immediate need of three

hundred thousand dollars. He did not dream of a rebuff. He was in high spirits. The news from Bull Run had greatly elated him. His wife's death he plainly regarded as a happy relief. Conceive of his wrath, when, in the midst of his lofty hopes and haughty demands, I handed him a copy of the memoranda, noted down by me this very day, in which Mrs. Ratcliff makes a very different disposition of the property."

"I know something of the man's temper," said Vance.

"He laughed a scornful laugh," resumed Winslow, "and, shaking his forefinger at me, said: 'You shall swing for this, you d—d old Yankee! Your trusteeship isn't worth a straw. I'll have you compelled to disgorge this very hour.' But when I told him that the whole half million, left in my hands by his wife's father, was safely deposited in gold in a Northern city, the man actually grew livid with rage. He drew his Derringer on me, and would probably have shot me but for the sober second thought that told him he could make more out of me living than dead. In a frenzy he left my office. This was about half an hour ago. After reflection on our interview I concluded it would be prudent in me to escape

from the city if possible, and I have come to ask if you can aid me in doing it."

"Nothing could be more opportune," replied Vance, "than your coming. I have laid all my plans to leave in a small steamer this very night. A young friend goes with me. You shall accompany us. Have you any preparations to make?"

"None, except to find some trustworthy person with whom I can leave an amount of money for the two slave-women of whom I spoke. For it would be dangerous, if not impracticable, to attempt to take them with us."

"Yes, use your golden keys to unlock their chains in this case," said Vance. "Do not show yourself again on the street. Ratcliff will at once have detectives at your heels. Hark! There's a knock at the door. Pass into my chamber, and lock yourself in, and open only to my rapping thus—one, two—one, two—one."

Winslow obeyed, and Vance, opening his parlour door, met Kenrick.

"Well, cousin," asked Vance, "are you all ready? You look pale, man! What's the matter?"

"Nothing," replied Kenrick; "that is, everything. I wish I'd never seen that Perdita Brown!

Look here! They've got her photograph in the print-shops. Beautiful, is it not?"

"Yes; it almost does her justice. Could you draw out from the Tremaines no remark which would afford a further clue?"

"After you had failed, what could I hope to do? But I'll tell you what I ventured upon. All stratagems in love and war are venial, I suppose. Seeing that Miss Tremaine was deeply interested in your conquering self, I tried to pique her by making her think you were secretly enamoured of Miss Brown. She denied it warmly. I then said: 'Reflect! Hasn't he been very inquisitive in trying to find out all he could about her?' She was obliged to confess that you had; and at last, after considerable skirmishing between us, she dropped this remark: 'Those who would fall in love with her had better first find out whether she's a lady.' 'She certainly appears one,' I replied. 'Yes,' said Miss Tremaine, 'and so does many a Creole who has African blood in her veins.'"

"Ah! what could that mean?" exclaimed Vance, thoughtfully. "Can that story of a paternal Brown be all a lie?"

Here there was a low knock at the door. Vance opened it, and there stood Peek.

"Come in!" said Vance, grasping him by the hand, drawing him in, and closing the door. "What news?"

And then, seeing the negro's hesitation, Vance turned to Kenrick, and said: "Cousin, this is the man to whom you need no introduction. He was christened Peculiar Institution; but for brevity, we call him Peek."

Kenrick put out his hand with a face so glowing with a cordial respect that Peek could not resist the proffer.

"Now, Peek," said Vance, "pull off that hot wig and those green spectacles, and, unless you would keep us standing, sit down and be at ease. There! That's right. Now, first of all, did you hit upon any trace of your wife and boy?"

"None, Mr. Vance. I think they cannot be in Texas."

"Then what of Colonel Delancy Hyde?"

"The Colonel was said to have attached himself to the fortunes of General Van Dorn. That's all I could find out about Hyde."

"Pity! I must unearth the fellow somehow. The fate of that poor little girl of the Pontiac haunts me night and day. My suspicions of foul play have been fully confirmed. When you have

time, read this letter which I had written to send you. It will tell you of all I learnt from Quattles and Amos Slink. But you have something to ask. What is it?"

"Where shall I find Captain Onslow of the Confederate army?"

Vance pointed to Kenrick, who replied: "I know him well. He is probably now in this house. 'Tis his usual time for dressing for dinner."

"I've terrible news for him," said Peek.

"What has happened?"

"On my way from Austin to Fort Duncan on the Rio Grande I passed through San Antonio. You have heard something of the persecutions of Union men in Western Texas?"

"Yes. Good heavens! Is old Onslow among the victims?"

"He and his whole family—wife, son, and daughter—have been slain by the Confederate agents."

The cousins looked at each other, and each grew paler as he read the other's thought. Vance spoke first. "Go on, Peek," he said. "Tell us what you know."

"The old man, you see," said Peek, "has been trying for some time to do without slave labour.

He has employed a good many Germans on his lands. The slaveholders haven't liked this. At the beginning of the Rebellion he went with old Houston and others against secession; but when Houston caved in, Onslow remained firm and plucky. He kept quiet, however, and did nothing that the Secesh authorities could find fault with. But what they wanted was an excuse for murdering him and seizing his lands. They employed three scoundrels, a broken-down lawyer, a planter, and a horse-jockey, to visit him under the pretence that they were good Union and anti-slavery men, trying to escape the conscription. The old man fell into the trap. Thinking he was among friends, he freely declared, that 'he meant to keep true to the old flag; that only one of his family had turned traitor; the rest (thank God!) including the women, were thoroughly loyal; that secession would prove a failure, and end (thank God always!) in the breaking up of slavery.' At the same time he told them he should make no resistance, either open or clandestine, to the laws of the State. The scoundrels tried to implicate him in some secret plot, but failed. They had drawn out of him enough, however, for their purposes. They left him, and straightway denounced him as

an Abolitionist. A gang of cutthroats, set on by the Rebel leaders, came to hang him. Well knowing he could expect no mercy, the old man barricaded his doors, armed his household, and prepared to resist. The women loaded the guns while the men fired. Several of the assailants were wounded. The rest grew furious, and at last made an entrance by a back door, rushed in, and overpowered William Onslow, the son, who had received a ball in his neck. They dragged him out and hung him to a tree. The daughter they tried to pinion and lash to the floor, but she fought so desperately that a ruffian, whose hair she had torn out by the roots, shot her dead. The mother, in a frantic attempt to save the daughter, received a blow on the head, from which she died. The old man, exhausted, and fatally wounded, was disarmed, and placed under guard in the room from which he had been firing. It was not till the women and the son were dead that I arrived on the spot. I claimed to be a Secesh nigger, and the passes Mr. Vance had given me confirmed my story. The Rebels regarded me as a friend and helper. I lurked round the room where the old man was confined, and at last, through whisky, I persuaded his guard to lie down and

go to sleep. I then made myself known to the sufferer. I helped him write a letter to his surviving son. Here it is, stained as you see by the writer's blood. You can read it, Mr. Vance. It contains no secrets. Hardly had I concealed it in my pocket, when some of the Rebels came in, seized the old man, helpless and dying as he was, and, dragging him out, hung him on a tree by the side of his son."

Peek ended his narrative, and Vance, taking the proffered letter, slowly drew it from the envelope and unfolded it. There dropped out four strands of hair; one white, one iron-gray, one a fine and thick flaxen, and one a rich brown-black.

"I cut off those strands of hair, thinking that Captain Onslow might prize them," said Peek.

"You did well," remarked Vance. "And since you have authority to permit it, I will read this letter."

He then read aloud as follows:—

"Stricken down by a death-wound, I write this. When it reaches you, my son, you will be the last survivor of your family. The faithful negro who bears this letter will tell you all. You may rely on what he says. This crafty, this Satanic Slave Power has— I can use the pen no

longer. But I can dictate. The negro must be my amanuensis."

And then, in a different handwriting, the letter proceeded:—

"This Slave Power, which, for many weeks past, has been hunting down and hanging Union men, has at last laid its bloody hand on our innocent household. Should you meet Colonel A. J. Hamilton,* he will tell you something of what the pro-slavery butchers have been doing.

"Yesterday three men called on me. They

* Late member of Congress from Texas. In his speech in New York (1862) he said: "I know that the loyalists of Texas have died deaths not heard of since the dark ages until now; not only hunted and shot, murdered upon their own thresholds, but tied up and scalded to death with boiling water; torn asunder by wild horses fastened to their feet; whole neighbourhoods of men exterminated, and their wives and children driven away."

It is estimated by a writer in the New Orleans Crescent (June, 1863), that at least *twenty-five hundred* persons have been hung in Texas during the preceding two years *for fidelity to the Union*.

The San Antonio (Texas) Herald, a rebel sheet of November 13, 1862, taunted the Unionists with the havoc that had been made among them! It says: "They (Union men) are known and will be remembered. Their numbers were small at first, and they are becoming every day less. In the mountains near Fort Clark and along the Rio Grande *their bones are bleaching in the sun*, and in the counties of Wire and Denton *their bodies are suspended by scores from black-jacks*."

Such are the shameless butchers and hangmen that slavery spawns!

brought forged letters from one I knew to be my friend. The trick succeeded. I admitted them to my confidence. They left and denounced me to the Confederate leaders. My only crime was a secret sympathy with the Union cause. Not a finger had I lifted or threatened to lift against the ruling powers of the State. But I did not love slavery—that was the crime of crimes in the eyes of Jeff Davis's immediate partisans and friends.

‘To-day they came with ropes to hang us—to hang us, remember, not for resistance to authority, however usurped, not for one imprudent act or threat against slavery, but simply because we were known at heart to disapprove of slavery, and consequently to love the old flag. And many hundreds have been hung here for no other offence. We knew we could expect no better fate than our neighbours had bravely encountered; and we resolved, men and women, to sell our lives dearly. Your brother fell wounded, and was hung; then your sister, resisting outrage, was slain; then your mother, striving to protect Emily, received a mortal blow. And I am lying here wounded, soon to be dragged forth and hung—for what?—for unbelief, not in a God, but in the Southern Confederacy and its corner-stone!

“And this is slavery! All these brutalities and wrongs spring from slavery as naturally as the fruit from the blossom. That which is inherently wrong must, by eternal laws, still produce and reproduce wrong. The right to hold one innocent man a slave, implies the right to enslave or murder any other man! There is no such right. It is a lie born in the inmost brain of hell. No laws can make it a right. No clamour of majorities can give it a sanction. In slavery, Satan once more scales the heavenly heights.

“Jeff Davis, I hear, has just joined the church. Would he be pardoned, and *retain* the offence? If so, not prayers nor sacrament can save his trembling and perjured soul from the guilt of such wrongs as I and mine, and hundreds of other true men and women, here in Texas have fallen under because of slavery. God is not to be cheated by any such flattering unction as Davis is laying to his heart. The more he seeks to cover profane with holy things, the deeper will be his damnation in that world where all shams and self-delusions are dissolved, and the true man stands revealed, to be judged by his fidelity to Christ's golden rule—to the cause of justice and humanity on earth.

"Our national agony is the old conflict of the Divine with the Satanic principle. Believe in God, my son, and you cannot doubt the result. Do you suppose Eternal Justice will be patient much longer? Think of the atrocities to which this American slave system has reconciled us! A free white man can, in any of the Slave States, go into a negro's house and beat or kill any of the inmates, and not be prosecuted by law, except a free white man sees him do it; because *a negro's testimony is not taken against a white man*. As for the *marriage* of slaves, you well know what a mere farce — what a subject for ribaldry and laughter — it is among the masters. No tie, whether of affection, of blood, or of form, is respected.*

"The originators of this rebellion saw that *by inevitable laws of population* slavery must go down under a republican form of government. Their fears and their jealousies of freedom grew intolerable. The very word *free* became hateful. They saw that their property in slaves depended

* "Marriage," says a Catholic bishop of a Southern State, quoted in the Cincinnati Catholic Telegraph, "is scarcely known amongst them (the slaves); the masters *attach no importance to it*. In some States those who teach them (the slaves) to read are *punished with death*."

for its duration on the action of political forces slumbering in the mass of their white population, which population, though now densely ignorant, would gradually learn that slavery is adverse to the interests of nine-tenths of the whites. And so this war was originated *even less to separate from the North than to crush into hopeless subjection, through that separation, the white masses at the South.* The slave barons dreaded lest this drugged and stupefied giant should rouse from his ignoble slumber, and, learning his strength, and opening his eyes to the truth, should, Samson-like, seize the pillars of their system. To prevent this, a grand oligarchy of slaveholders must be created, and the liberties of the whites destroyed!

“You will see all this, now, my son. Yes, I have this comfort in my extremity: my son will be converted from wrong; the stubborn head will be reached through the stricken heart; we shall not have died in vain. And his conversion will be instantaneous. But be prudent, my son. Let not passion betray you. These Rebel leaders are as remorseless as they are crafty. All the bad energies of the very Prince of Devils are ranged on their side, and will help them to temporary success.

"Let them see that higher and more persistent energies can spring from the right. What I most fear for the North is the paralyzing effect of its prosperity. It will go on thriving on the war, while the South is learning the wholesome training of adversity. Young men at the North will be tempted by money-making to stay at home. The voice of Mammon will be louder than the voice of God in their hearts. This will be their tremendous peril. But God will not be thwarted. If prosperity will not make the North do God's work, then adversity must be called in.

"Set your heart on no private vengeance, my son. Take this as my dying entreaty. Let your revenge be the restoration of the old flag. All the rest must follow as the night the day. . . . And now, farewell! May God bless and guide you! I go to join your mother, brother, and sister. Their spirits are round me while I speak. Their love goes forth to you with mine, and my prayer for you is their prayer also. Adieu!"

There was a silence for a full minute after the reading.

"I'll wait," said Kenrick, "till he gets through dinner before I tell him the news. He'll need all his strength, poor fellow!"

"I foresee," said Vance, "that Onslow will be of our party of escape this night." And then, turning to Peek, he remarked: "Your coming, Peculiar, is timely. I want the help of a trustworthy driver. You are the man for us. Can you, without exciting suspicion, get the control of a carriage and two fast, fresh horses?"

Peek reflected a moment, and then said: "Yes; I know a coloured man, Antoine Lafour, who has the care of two of the best horses in the city. His master really thinks Antoine would fight any Abolitionist who might come to free him; but Antoine and I laugh at the old man's credulity."

"There's yet another service you can render," said Vance; and he gave five raps on the door of his chamber.

The lock was turned from the inside, and Winslow appeared.

"You're among friends," said Vance. "This is my cousin, Mr. Kenrick; and this is Peculiar Institution, otherwise called Peek. Notwithstanding his inauspicious name, you may trust him as you would your own right hand."

"But I want an agent who can write and keep accounts."

"Then Peek is just the man for you. Of his ability you can satisfy yourself in five minutes. For his *honesty* I will vouch."

"But will he remain in New Orleans the next six months?"

"I hope so," replied Vance. "This is my plan for you, Peek: that you should still occupy that little house of mine with the Bernards. I've spoken to them about it; and they will treat you well for my sake. I want some one here with whom I may freely communicate; and more, I want you to pursue your search for Colonel Delancy Hyde, and to secure him when found, which you can easily do with money. Will you remain?"

"You know how it is with me, Mr. Vance?" said Peek. "I have two objects in life: One is to find my wife and child; the other is to help on the great cause. For both these objects I can have no better head-quarters than New Orleans."

"Good! He will remain, Mr. Winslow. Go now both of you into the next room. You'll find writing materials on the table."

The old man and the negro withdrew. Kenrick paced the floor, thinking one moment of Clara, and the next of the dreadful communication he must

make to Onslow. Vance sat down and leaned his head on his hands to consider if there was anything he had left undone.

"I hear some one knocking at the door of my room," said Kenrick. He went into the corridor, and a servant handed him a card. It was from Onslow, and pencilled on it was the following:—

"Come to the dinner-table, Kenrick. Where are you? Dreaming of Perdita? Or planning impracticable victories for your Yankee friends? Come and join me in a bottle of claret. It may be our last together. Only think of it, my dear fellow, I am to be made a Colonel! But that will not please you. Sink politics! We will ignore all that is disagreeable. There shall be no slavery—no Rebeldom—no Yankeedom. All shall be Arcadian. We will talk over old times, and compare notes in regard to Perdita. I don't believe you are a tenth part as much in love as I am. Where has the enchantress gone? 'O matchless sweetness! whither art thou vanished? O thou fair soul of all thy sex! what paradise hast thou enriched and blessed?' Come, Kenrick, come; if only for auld lang syne, come and chat with me; for the day of action draws near, when there shall be no more chatting!"

Sick at heart, Kenrick handed the card to Vance, who read it, and said: "The sooner a disagreeable duty is discharged the better. Go, cousin, and let him know the character of that fell Power which he would serve. Let him know what reason he, of all men, has to love it!"

"I'd rather face a battery than do it; but it must be done."

At the same moment Winslow and the negro entered.

"I've arranged everything with Peek," said the old man.

"I've placed in his hands funds which I think will be sufficient."

"That reminds me that I must do the same," said Vance; and, taking a large sum in bank-bills from his pocket-book, he gave it to Peek to use as he might see fit, first for the common cause, and secondly for prosecuting inquiries in regard to the kidnapped child of the Pontiac, and his own family.

Peek carefully noted down dates and amounts in a memorandum-book, and then remarked, "Now I must see Captain Onslow."

"Give me that letter from his father, and I will myself deliver it," said Kenrick.

"But I promised to see him."

"That you can do this evening."

Peek gave up the letter, and Kenrick darted out of the room.

Turning to Vance and Winslow, Peek remarked: "I thank you for your confidence, gentlemen. I'll do my best to deserve it."

"I wish our banks deserved it as well," said Vance; then he added: "And now, Peek, make your arrangements carefully, and be with the carriage at the door just under my window at nine o'clock precisely."

Peek compared watches with Vance, promised to be punctual, and took his leave.

Vance rang the bell, and ordered a private dinner for two.

Unlocking a drawer, he took from it two revolvers, and handed one to Winslow, with the remark, "You are skilled in the use of the pistol, I suppose?"

"Though I've been a planter and owned slaves, I must say *No*."

"Then a revolver would rather be a danger than a security."

And Vance thrust the pistols into the side-pockets of his own coat.

Dinner was brought in.

"Come," said Vance, "we must eat. My way of life has compelled me to suffer no excitement to impair my appetite. Indeed, I have passed through the one supreme excitement, after which all others, even the prospect of immediate death, are quite tame. Happy the man, Mr. Winslow, who can say, I cling to this life no longer for myself, but for others and for humanity!"

"Such a sentiment would better become a man of my age than of yours," replied Winslow.

"Here's the dinner," said Vance. "Now let us talk nothing but nonsense. Let us think of nothing that requires the effort of a serious thought."

"Well then," replied Winslow, "suppose we discuss the last number of De Bow's Review, or that charlatan Maury's last lying letter in the London Times."

"Excellent!" said Vance. "For reaching the very sublime of the superficial, commend me to De Bow or to the Chevalier Maury."

Before the dinner was over, each man felt that the day had not been unprofitable, since he had earned a friend.

CHAPTER XIX.

LIGHT FROM THE PIT.

There's not a breathing of the common wind
 That will forget thee ; thou hast great allies ;
 Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
 And love, and Man's unconquerable mind.

Wordsworth.

KENRICK found Onslow seated at one of the tables of the large dining-hall and expecting his coming. The chair on his right was tipped over on its fore legs against the table as a signal that the seat was engaged. On Onslow's right sat the scoffer, Robson.

As Kenrick advanced, Onslow rose, took him by the hand, and placed him in the reserved seat. Robson bowed, and filled three glasses with claret.

"But how grave and pale you look, Charles !" said Onslow. "What the deuce is the matter ? Come on ! *Absit atra cura !* Begone, dull care !

Toss off that glass of claret, or Robson will scorn you as a skulker."

"The wine is not bad," said Robson, "but there should have been ice in the cooler. May the universal Yankee nation be eternally and immitigably consigned to perdition for depriving us of our ice! Every time I am thirsty—and that is fifty times a day—my temper is tried, and I wish I had a plenipotentiary power of cursing. With the thermometer at ninety, 'tis a lie to say Cotton is king. Ice is king. The glory of our juleps has departed. For my own part, I would grovel at old Abe's feet if he would give us ice."

Kenrick could not force a smile. He touched his lips with the claret.

"You will take soup?" inquired Onslow. "It is tomato, and very good."

"What you please, I'm not hungry."

Onslow ordered the servant to bring a plate of soup. Kenrick stirred it a moment, tasted, then pushed it from him. Its colour reminded him of the precious blood, dear to his friend, which had been so ruthlessly shed.

"A plate of pompinee," said Onslow.

The dainty fish was put before Kenrick, and he

broke it into morsels with his fork, then told the servant to take it away.

"But you've no appetite," complained Onslow.

"Is it the Perdita?"

Kenrick shook his head mournfully.

"Is it Bull Run?"

"No. Had not somebody been afraid of hurting slavery, and so played the laggard, the United States forces would have carried the day; and that would have been the worst thing for the country that could have happened!"

"Did I not promise there should be no politics? Nevertheless, expound."

"He laughs best who laughs last. Let that suffice. It is not time yet for the Union to gain decisive victories; nor will it be time till the conscience of the people of the North is right and ripe for the uprooting of slavery. Their conservative politicians—their Seymours and Pughs—who complain of the 'irrepressible negro'—must find out it is the irrepressible God Almighty, and give up kicking against the pricks. Then when the North as one man shall say, 'Thy kingdom come'—Thy kingdom of justice and compassion—then, O then! we may look for the glorious day-star that shall herald the dawn. God reigns.

Therefore shall slavery not reign. I believe in the moral government of the world."

"Isn't it a pity, Robson, that so good a fellow as Charles should be so bitter an Abolitionist?"

"Wait till he's tempted with a colonelcy in the Confederate army," sneered Robson. "Ah! Mr. Kenrick, when you see Onslow charging into Philadelphia, at the head of his troop of horse, sacking that plethoric old city of rectangles—leering at the pretty Quakeresses—knocking down his own men for unsoldierly familiarities—walking into those Chestnut Street jewellery stores and pocketing the diamond rings—when you see all that, you'll wish you'd gone with the winning side."

"As I live," cried Onslow, "there's a tear in his eye! What does it mean, Charley?"

"If it is a tear, respect its sanctity," replied Kenrick gravely.

"Gentlemen, I must go," said Robson, who found the atmosphere unjoyous and uncongenial. "Good by! I've a polite invitation to be present at a meeting to raise money for the outfit of a new regiment. Between ourselves, if it were a proposition to supply the alligators in our bayous with gutta-percha tails, I would con-

tribute my money much more cheerfully, assured that it would do much more good, and be a far more profitable investment. Addio!"

No sooner was he gone than Kenrick said: "Let us adjourn to your room. I have something to say to you."

In silence the friends passed out of the hall and upstairs into Onslow's sleeping apartment.

"Kenrick," said he, "your manner is inexplicable. It chills and distresses me. If I can do anything for you before I go North to fight for the stars and bars—"

"Never will you lift the arm for that false flag!" interrupted Kenrick. "You will join me this very hour in cursing it and spurning it."

"Charles, your hate of the Confederacy grows morbid. Let it not make us private as well as public enemies."

"No, Robert, we shall be faster friends than ever."

And Kenrick affectionately threw his arms round his friend and pressed him to his breast.

"What does this mean, Charles?" cried Onslow. "There's a terrible pity in your eyes. Explain it, I beseech you."

Kenrick drew from his pocket a letter-enve-

lope, and, taking from it four strands of hair, placed them on the white marble of the bureau before Onslow's eyes. The Captain looked at them wonderingly; took up one after another, examined it, and laid it down. His breast began to heave, and his cheek to pale. He looked at Kenrick, then turned quickly away, as if dreading some foreshadowing of an evil not to be uttered. For five minutes he walked the room, and said nothing. Then he again went to the bureau and regarded the strands of hair.

"Well," said he, speaking tremulously and quickly, and not daring to look at Kenrick, "I recognize these locks of hair. This white hair is my father's; this half gray is my mother's; this beautiful flaxen is my sister Emily's; and this brownish-black is my brother's. Why do you put these before me? A sentimental way of telling me, I suppose, that they all send their love, and beg I would turn Abolitionist?"

"Yes," sighed Kenrick. "From their graves they beg it."

With a look of unspeakable horror, his hands pressed on the top of his head as if to keep down some volcanic throe, Onslow stood speechless, staring at his friend.

Kenrick led him gently to the sofa, forced him to sit down, and then, with a tenderness almost womanly in its delicacy, removed the sufferer's hands from his head, and smoothed back his thick fine hair from his brow. Onslow's inward groanings began to grow audible. Suddenly he rose, as if resolved to master his weakness. Then, sinking down, he exclaimed, "God of heaven, can it be?" And then groans piteous but tearless succeeded.

At last, as if bracing himself to an effort that tore his very heart-strings, he rose and said, "Now, Charles, tell me all."

Kenrick handed him the letter which Peek had brought. "Let me leave you while you read," he said. Onslow did not object; and Kenrick went into the corridor, and walked there to and fro for nearly half an hour. Then he re-entered the chamber. Onslow was on his knees by the sofa; his father's letter, smeared with his father's life-blood, in his hand. The young man had been praying. And his eyes showed that prayer had so softened his heart that he could weep. He rose, calm, though very pale.

"Where can I see this negro?" he asked.

"He will be here at the hotel this evening," replied Kenrick.

"And what—what," said Onslow, hesitatingly, "what did they do with my father?"

"They hung him on the same tree with your brother."

"Yes," said Onslow, with a calmness more terrible than a frantic grief. "Yes! Of course his gray hairs were no protection."

There was a pause; and then, "What do you mean to do?" said Kenrick.

"Can you doubt?" exclaimed Onslow.

A servant knocked at the door and left a package. It contained a complimentary letter and a Colonel's commission, signed by the Confederate authorities. "You see these," said Onslow, handing them to Kenrick. Then, taking them, he contemptuously tore them, and madly threw the pieces on the floor.

"Yes, my father is right," he cried. "It is slavery that has done this horror. On the head of slavery lies the guilt. O the blind fool, the abject fawner, that I've been! Instead of being by the side of my brave brother, here I was wearing the detested livery of the brutal Power that smote down a whole family because they would not kneel at its bloody footstool! Who ever heard of a man being harmed at the North

for *defending* slavery? No! 'tis a foul lie to say that aught but slavery can prompt and lend itself to such barbarities! The cowardly butchers! O, d—n them! d—n them!”

And he tore from his shoulders the badges of his military rank, and, spurning them with his foot, continued: “My noble father! the good, the devout, the heroic old man! How, even under his mortal agony, his belief in God, in right, in immortality, shines forth! Did ever an outcast creature apply to him in vain for help? Quick to resent, how much quicker he was to forgive! The soul of rectitude and truth! Did you ever see his seal, Charles? A straight line with the motto *Omnium brevissima recta!* But he could not bow to slavery as the supreme good. For that he and his must be slaughtered! And William, the brave and gentle! And Emily, the tenderly bred and beautiful! And my sainted—”

He knelt, and raising both arms to heaven, cried: “Hear me, O God! Eternal Justice, hear me! If ever again, in thought or act, I show mercy to this merciless Slave Power—if ever again I palliate its crimes or utter a word in extenuation of its horrors—that moment annihilate me as a wretch unfit either for this world or any other!”

Then, rising, he said, "Kenrick, your hand!"

"Not yet," said Kenrick. "My friend, slavery is no worse to-day than it was yesterday. You have known for the last three months that these minions and hirelings of the slave aristocracy were hounding, hanging, and torturing men throughout Slavedom, for the crime of being true to their country's flag."

"I knew it, Kenrick; but my heart was hardened, and therefore have God's hammers smitten it thrice—nay, four times, terribly! I saw these things, but turned away from them! Idle and false to say, slavery is not responsible for them! They are the very spawn of its filthy loins. I know it—I, who have been behind the scenes, know what the leaders say as to the means of treading out every spark of Union fire. And I—heedless idiot that I was! never once thought that the bloody instructions might return to plague *me*—that my own father's family might be among the foremost victims! I acknowledge the hand of God in this stroke! A voice cries to me, as of old to Saul, 'Why persecutest thou *me*?' And now there fall from my eyes as it were scales, and I arise and am baptized!"

"My dear friend," said Kenrick, "I want your

conversion to be, not the result of mere passion, but of calm conviction. I have been asking myself, What if a party of Unionists should outrage and murder those who are nearest and dearest to myself—would I, therefore, embrace the proslavery cause? And from the very depths of my soul I can cry, *No!* Not through passion—though I have seen enough of that—but through the persuasion of my intellect, added to the affirmation of my heart, do I array myself against this hideous Moloch of slavery. By a terrible law of affinity, wrongs and crimes cannot stand alone. They must summon other wrongs and crimes to their support; and so does murder as naturally follow in the train of slavery, as the little parasite fish follows the shark. It is fallacy to say that the best men among slaveholders do not approve of these outrages; for these outrages are now the necessary and inseparable attendants of the system.”

“I believe it,” said Onslow. “O the wickedness of my apostasy from my father’s faith! O the sin, and O the punishment! It needed a terrible blow to reach me, and it has come. Kenrick, do not withhold your hand. Trust me, my conversion is radical. The ‘institution’ shall

henceforth find in me its deadliest foe. '*De-lenda est!*' is now and henceforth my motto!"

Kenrick clasped his proffered hand, and, looking up, said, "So prosper us, Almighty Disposer, as we are true to the promises of this hour!"

"Charles," said Onslow, "I did not think that Perdita would so soon have her prayer granted."

"What do you mean?"

"Her last words to me were, 'May this arm never be lifted except in the cause of right!' I feel that God has heard her."

It jarred on Kenrick's heart for the moment to see that Onslow, in the midst of his troubles, still thought of Perdita; but soon, stilling the selfish tremor, he said: "What we would do we must do quickly. Will you go North with me and join the armies of the Union?"

"Yes, the first opportunity."

"That opportunity will be this very night."

"So much the better! I'm ready. I had but one tie to bind me here; and that was Perdita. And she has fled. And what would I be to her, were she here? Nothing! Charles, this day's news has made me ten years older already. O for an army with banners, to go down into that

bloody region of the Rio Grande, and right the wrongs of the persecuted!"

"Be patient. We shall live to see the old flag wave resplendent over free and regenerated Texas."

"Amen! Good heavens, Charles!—it appals me, when I think what a different man I am from what I was when I crossed this threshold, one little hour ago!"

"In these volcanic days," said Kenrick, "such changes are not surprising. These terrible eruptions, 'painting hell on the sky,' uprear many old convictions, and illumine many benighted minds."

"Yes," rejoined Onslow, "in that infernal flash, coming from my own violated home, I see slavery as it is—monstrous, bestial, devilish!—no longer the graceful, genteel, hospitable, and fascinating embodiment which I—fond fool that I was!—have been wont to think it. The Republicans of the North were right in declaring that not one inch more of national soil should be surrendered to the pollutions of slavery."

"Time flies," said Kenrick. "Have you any preparations to make?"

"Yes, a few bills to pay and a few letters to write."

"Can you despatch all your work by quarter to nine?"

"Sooner, if need be."

"That will answer. Have your baggage ready, and let it be compact as possible. I'll call for you at your room at quarter to nine. Vance goes with us."

"Is it possible? I supposed him an ultra Secessionist."

"He has a stronger personal cause than even you to strike at slavery."

"Can that be? Well, he shall find me no tame ally. Do you know, Charles, you resemble him personally?"

"Yes, there's good reason for it. We are cousins."

Onslow's heart was too full to comment on the reply. He took up the strands of hair, kissed them fervently, and placed them with his father's letter in a little silk watch-bag, which he pinned inside of his vest just over his heart.

"If ever my new faith should falter," he said, "here are the mementos that will revive it. God! Did I need all this for my reformation?"

“Be firm—be prudent, my friend,” said Kenrick. “And now, good by till we meet again.”

Onslow pressed Kenrick’s proffered hand, and replied, “You shall find me punctual.”

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

LONDON

PRINTED BY SPOTTISWOODE AND CO.

NEW-STREET SQUARE

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